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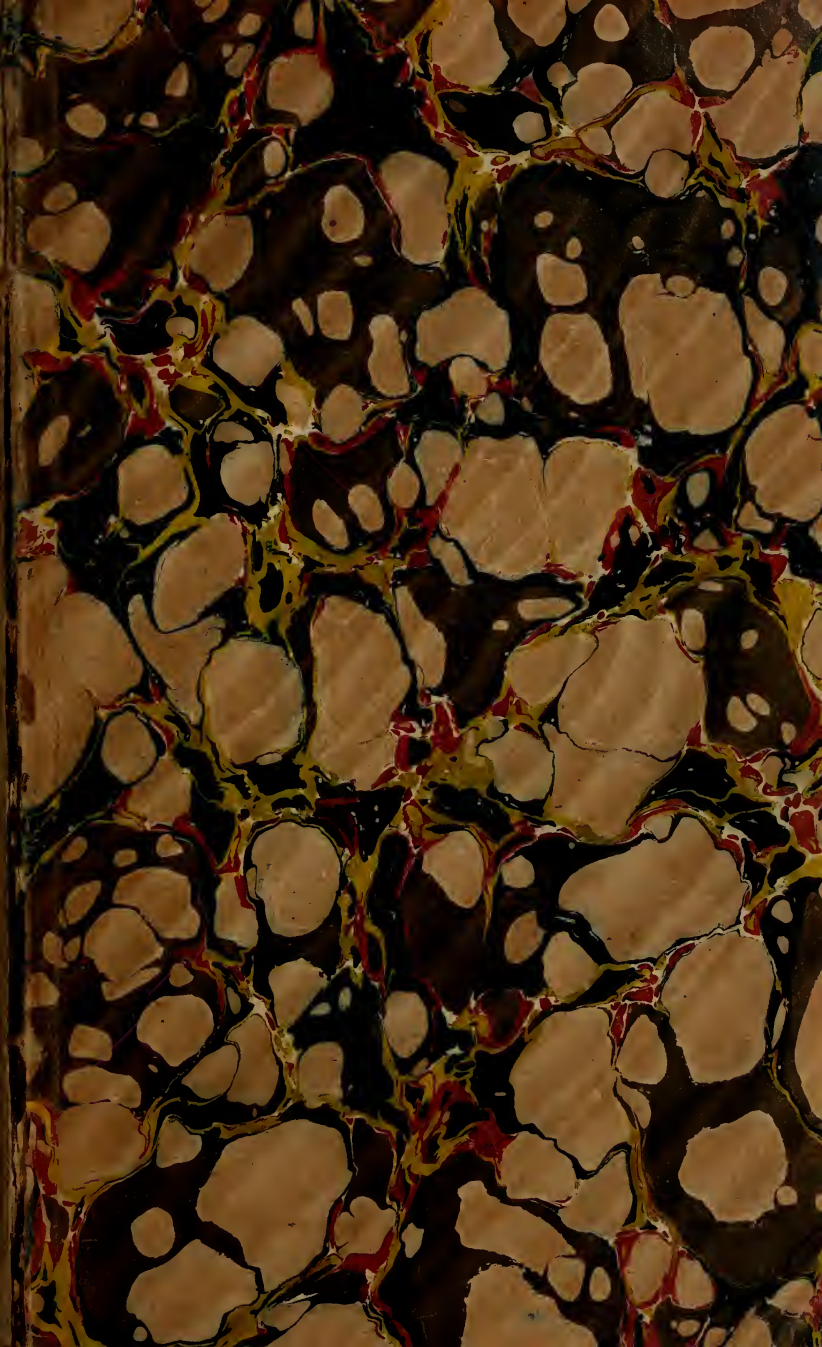


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John Bentall



WARLEIGH;

OR,

THE FATAL OAK.

A Legend of Devon.

BY

MRS. BRAY,

AUTHOR OF "FITZ OF FITZ-FORD," "THE TALBA,"
"THE WHITE HOODS," "DE FOIX," &c. &c.

——— "Many a tale
Traditionary round the mountains hung,
And many a legend peopling the dark woods
Nourish'd Imagination in her growth."
Excursion, Book 1.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO
ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.
POET LAUREATE, &c. &c.

WHOSE
GENIUS, LEARNING, AND CHARACTER DO SO MUCH
HONOUR TO HIS COUNTRY,

THESE VOLUMES
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
AS
A TRIFLING BUT SINCERE MARK
OF
THE UNFEIGNED ADMIRATION, ESTEEM, AND
HEARTFELT GRATITUDE
OF
THEIR AUTHOR.

Vicarage, Tavistock,
Jan. 1. 1832.

In the Press,

LETTERS TO THE LAUREATE, Historical,
Biographical, and Descriptive of the Vicinities of
the Tamar and the Tavy. By Mrs. BRAY.

Preparing for the Press by the same Authoress,

TRELAWNY OF TRELAWN; or, THE PRO-
PHECY. A Legend of Cornwall.

WARLEIGH.

INTRODUCTION.

I love, thus uncontroll'd, as in a dream,
To muse upon the course of human things ;
Exploring sometimes the remotest springs,
Far as tradition lends one guiding gleam.

SOUTHEY'S *Tale of Paraguay*.

THERE is no county, perhaps, in England, that abounds more in the traditions of old times and families than that of Devon. These, however, are fast falling into oblivion. The rising generation, who, commonly speaking, are eager to follow in the march of intellect, smile at the legends of their grandmothers ; and the elders themselves, who are mostly the living depositaries of this kind of lore, gradually sink into their graves ; and, with them, too often dies a fund of information which has no written record.

Many of the traditions to which I have alluded (no doubt, like all other tales) lose nothing of their wonders by transmission from generation to generation. Nevertheless, there is that of simplicity and nature about them, which may be considered a strong presumptive evidence that they are founded in truth: in some instances, also, they are confirmed by points of known history, with which they are, more or less, connected. For my own part, I confess that I have ever felt a great delight in collecting the fragments of such old stories as are nearly forgotten, or in danger of becoming extinct; and, whilst listening to a tale of other times, I have not been so over critical as to object to every thing that is told unless I could find confirmation of its truth (to adopt a vulgar but expressive phrase) in black and white. It may be a deception, — it may be credulity to listen to it; still the illusion is harmless: nor can it fail to be replete with lively associations, that engage the imagination, and call up many a reflecting mood on times and things long past away.

Living, as I do, in the midst of a most

delightful part of Devon, how much interest is conveyed to an ancient dwelling, a particular rock, or a lone valley, with its bubbling stream and its beautiful hanging woods, by being able to fancy “*This is the scene,*” or “*This is the spot,*” where such and such events are said to have occurred ! Who, for instance, even though he be a stranger, can look upon the narrow rocky cavern, so long said to have sheltered the persecuted royalist, Elford, without dwelling with interest on the recollection of those times when so many worthies of this county, gallantly suffered, bled, and died, in the cause of loyalty and religion ? This latter observation, indeed, is not altogether inapplicable to the present subject ; since the story connected with that cavern, now considered by the peasantry as a pixie haunt, first excited my imagination, and induced me to collect such particulars as might still be gleaned from oral tradition respecting the remarkable local events of the neighbourhood in which I live.

This soon became with me a favourite pursuit ; and though I was not always success-

ful in gaining as much intelligence as I desired, yet the many beautiful scenes, curious old houses, and antiquities, which I visited during these researches, were exceedingly interesting; and, in addition to the opportunities I thus gained of acquiring a knowledge of past times, I had the gratification of experiencing the kindness and goodwill of many a family, who obligingly afforded me all the information they were able to communicate, and sometimes, when they had nothing to tell, their old family pictures, their ancient dwelling, and even their furniture, supplied a fund for observation. Indeed, I received so many kindnesses of this nature, that I should feel a grateful pleasure in here naming all the benefactors to my researches, did I not fear lest, in doing so, I might be charged with being too particular on a subject that cannot interest others so much as it does myself.

However, I cannot wholly refrain from expressing my thanks to the Earl of Mount Edgumbe, for the liberal manner in which his Lordship afforded me every facility in his power

to assist my pursuits at Mount Edgcumbe.* One family in particular must also be named, since Warleigh is now theirs; and I trust that some slight relation of my visit to that ancient baronial residence will not here be found misplaced; for the following work owes its existence to a circumstance of that visit, which will speedily be told.

It was a beautiful day, towards the close of the summer of 1830, that, in company with a small party of friends, I set off in a boat from Devonport, to visit the mansion, as well as the family, at Warleigh. I shall not here detain my reader by describing to him very minutely our ever-varying progress, as we passed up the Hamoaze, formed by the united waters of many rivers, — that expansive estuary which unites

* The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe has not only enlarged and decorated the ancient family seat in a style of the utmost magnificence, but has placed within it a rare and beautiful collection of paintings. His Lordship has also added some costly gardens, in the style of different nations. These are all worthy of admiration; but the lover of nature, in her wildest forms, will feel his obligation to the good taste of the present proprietor, who so carefully preserves the venerable and majestic trees of the domain.

itself with the Sound; nor shall I detail to him the number of men-of-war that, in this “ piping time of peace,” are constantly kept floating on its surface, where a thousand little boats, all day in motion, add to the life and animation of the scene. I shall only tell him, that if he be an antiquary, and should ever make the same excursion, he will look with an eye of interest on Saltash — though it is not at all a beautiful place — as he sees it lying on the slope of a steep hill; for Saltash will afford him a theme for debate, whether it was, or was not, the Tamare of Antoninus. The learned differ in opinion; some fixing it at the town just named, and others declaring Tamerton (so very germane in sound) to have been the site of that ancient Roman station.*

On passing Saltash, a most lovely scene presents itself; for the river becomes so broad that it looks not unlike a lake: villages, each

* The writer of these pages has been assured, that some thirty or forty years ago, a Roman altar, various fragments of pottery, and several coins, were dug up at Tamerton. If this be true, it would go far to settle the dispute in favour of the Devonshire village.

with the tower of its ancient church, arise in succession amid thick woods or verdant slopes; and the mouths of the many rivers present to the eye a vast variety of objects replete with interest. And scarcely had we ceased to admire these than we came in sight of the oak-crowned point of Warleigh, that boldly projects itself at the entrance of the Tavy. Immediately beyond it arose gently-swelling hills, beautifully wooded, and now seen rich in their liveries of green and russet. On one of these was Maristow, the seat of Sir M. Lopez; whilst Dartmoor, which ever affords the finest backgrounds in Devonshire scenery, stood towering in the distance, showing its heights, composed of granite tors, glittering in the sun. The varying effects of light and shade upon these eminences were exceedingly striking. The glow of the horizon was of a dazzling brightness; but a mass of dark clouds, that sailed slowly onward, soon cast their shadows upon the lower declivities, and showed distinctly the bold and picturesque outlines of the extensive moor.

There was a charm also in the calmness of

the day, and in the deep repose of the scene : for the waters — bound up, as it were, in slumber — lay spread around like a clear mirror, in whose silvery surface, distinctly reflected, appeared the clouds and the feathering woods, as they hung gracefully bending over the shelving shores. There was something, too, of interest in watching the silent and gentle motion with which we now glided down Tamerton Creek, towards the town of that name ; for a visit to the church had been determined upon before we proceeded to Warleigh House. The creek is skirted by the woods, and a fine bald rock, of a considerable elevation, that bears the name of Warleigh Tor, gives a character of grandeur even to this small inlet of the majestic Tavy.

The little village of Tamerton is sequestered and picturesque, presenting many such combinations as a Prout or a Hitchins* would

* An artist of the highest merit, bred and living in Tavistock, who, could his friends prevail with him to exert his talents professionally, would become an honour to the arts of his country.

treat with a skill in which few have yet been their rivals. Tamerton might almost be called “the meeting of the vallies,” for three of them there unite together; and, in the midst, on a gentle swell of a hill, stands the beautiful weather-beaten old church, that has beheld many a century bring beneath its venerable roof the generations of the village in succession, at their baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and with the self-same bells has rung out a peal for their bridals, or a solemn knell at their departure.

We ascended a flight of steps, hewn out of the living rock, which led from the village to the church, where, on entering, we listened to the good old sexton, who told us many a tale about the parish; and who, having got hold of what he fancied to be a finer word than is usually found to mingle itself in village colloquies, repeated it to us about fifty times over, as he sat, leaning on his staff, on the pulpit stairs. “The *poplation* of Tamerton was,” he said, “very much increased; for, when he was a boy, he remembered no *poplation* at all in comparison to it; but all *poplations* were so, since

Bonaparte and the wars had been put down by the Duke of Wellington."

Our conductor pointed out to us one or two monuments that he deemed of importance. We looked also at the ancient tombs of the Foliot and the Copplestones, and the white-washed effigies of Roger de Gorges and his lady; which the good sexton assured us a young gentleman, who made drawings and maps of old figures, had come all the way from London for the purpose of cleaning: and surely, if such were the case, it was an act much wanted; and for which the noble knight, who never contemplated such a surcoat of white-wash for his monumental armour, would, doubtless, have been thankful. We quitted the old church, and its sombre cemetery, surrounded by tall and shadowy trees, in a mood accordant with serious thoughts and feelings, in order to look upon what is called "the Copplestone Oak," after having just looked upon the "Copplestone Tomb," and listened to the legend respecting its long-remembered tenant; when — how shall I speak our surprise at a scene, so much in con-

trast, that now burst upon our sight? — on the village green, close without the churchyard, and full in view of this celebrated tree, a group, the gayest and the most attractive, surprised us into a feeling of cheerfulness and pleasure, almost before we were conscious of the change.

The village green was tastefully festooned and garlanded with flowers, laurels, and myrtle. Tables of the choicest fruits were spread in gay and inviting luxuriance; whilst, on “the smooth shaven turf” appeared, with all the joyous and mirthful character of a village fair, not merely the “neat-handed” Phillises of the cottage or the farm, but a “bevy of ladies,” distinguished by elegance and rank; and, to their praise be it spoken, by benevolence also. It was, in fact, on this day, and at this place, that the Tamerton festival was held, for the benefit of the village school. Youth, beauty, and elegance are at all times attractive; but, when thus seen grouped amidst trees and flowers, glittering in the sun, and canopied by the blue arch of a summer sky, the effect produced by such objects became so heightened, so engag-

ing, that not even the gloom of the dark yews, nor the sombre tints of the old church tower, which stood, like a monitor to mirth and beauty, in the background, could create other than delighted feelings.

It was here that the amiable and accomplished conductress of the festival, the mistress of Warleigh, received us : and, after having paid our respects to one so justly entitled to the universal regard in which she is held ; having gazed on the Coppelstone Oak, and heard the often-told tale once more repeated, we set off in company with Mr. R——, the worthy proprietor of Warleigh, to visit that ancient mansion. We were much gratified by the kind attention of our guide. Mr. R—— is of a character, now, alas ! getting too much out of fashion. He retains the plain, open sincerity of old English manners ; looks as if he meant what he says, and says nothing but what he feels ; pays no compliment, but that which is the most honest of all compliments, and shows good nature as well as good manners,— a ready attention to oblige, or to do any act of kind-

ness that may be acceptable to the feelings of another ; and who is both old-fashioned and warm-hearted enough to give a friend a hearty shake by the hand, and to drink a health to him at table.

Mr. R—— conducted us through a considerable part of his domain, and took us to the summit of a hill which commands an extensive prospect of the surrounding country. The rivers Tavy and Tamar, the Lake, Saltash, the Hamoaze, with the high lands of Cornwall and Devon, clothed with wood and verdure, and finely contrasted by the rugged and sterile character of Dartmoor, the pretty village of Tadmerton, the church, with the farms and cottages around, all combined to produce one of those successions of interesting objects so well suited to panoramic painting.

We continued our way across some fields, where, on gaining a particular spot on the side of a hill, not far distant from the river, the fine baronial residence of Warleigh, its avenues of noble trees, gardens, and plantations ; the whole backed by the clear blue waters of the Tavy, at

once burst upon our sight; and, as we descended towards the house, every step presented a new combination of scenic and beautiful effects.

Whilst we passed along, the situation of Warleigh, the families to which it had successively belonged during so many generations, and the ancient name by which it was distinguished, became a theme of discourse. Nor can I forbear mentioning that Mr. R—— (who stated also that his uncle, a well-known antiquary, had carefully investigated the subject, and come to the same conclusion) gave it as his opinion, that the woods of Warleigh had been the scene of Ethelwold's murder, whilst hunting, by the hand of Edgar. The following few, but strong reasons, may be stated in support of this opinion :—

Orgar, Earl of Devon, who founded its abbey, resided in Tavistock; and it was there that his daughter, the beautiful Elfrida, was visited by Ethelwold; who, being sent by Edgar as an emissary of love, abused the confidence reposed in him, and wooed and wedded her himself. And there, too, again influenced by the renovated fame of her beauty, the king

came in person to visit her, under the pretext of enjoying a hunting match in the neighbourhood. Captivated by her charms, he determined on the death of her husband; who, whilst hunting "in a wood at Warewell," says Malmesbury, "was slain by a javelin." Some antiquaries have placed the scene of this event on the opposite side of the river Tamar, at Harewood*, in Cornwall; a most improbable conjecture; since, in order to reach it, Edgar must have encountered the most formidable difficulties—those of riding many miles about, through forests vast and intricate, and rendered dangerous of access by a river so broad and deep as the Tamar: for no bridge could at any time have existed nearer than Newbridge, which is of a much later period; whilst, on the other hand, Warleigh, or Warwell woods, as Malmesbury calls them, were situated but ten or twelve miles from Tavistock, and no river intervened, to render access to them either difficult or dangerous. Besides, they were in all respects

* Mason has done so, likewise, in his tragedy of "Elfrida."

fitted for the pleasures of the chase. If, however, it was improbable that Edgar should cross the river into Cornwall to commit the murder, still less likely is it (as some antiquaries aver) that he should ride so far as into *Dorsetshire* for that purpose. The historian Malmesbury possibly might have been mistaken when he says that Elfrida built a nunnery at *Harewood*, on the spot where her *husband* was slain. After the death of Edgar, who killed him, she retired to Corfe Castle, where she caused his unfortunate son, the issue of a former marriage, to be stabbed in the back, whilst at her own gate. He rode off, mortally wounded, and, at length, dropping dead from his horse, the body was found in a wood. Might it not, therefore, have been in consequence of this, that, after she was awakened to repentance, she erected the nunnery in expiation of so atrocious a crime? The death of Ethelwold probably cost her no remorse, since there is no evidence that she had any share in that murder.

To return, however, from this digression. — We proceeded on to Warleigh; but, as in the

following pages I shall have occasion to speak more at large respecting this venerable mansion, I shall here only observe that we found it a substantial and noble piece of architecture; originally built in the reign of king Stephen, but altered and enlarged in the times of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, and having very recently received the addition of a rich doorway, quite in character with the original building.

After showing us the hall, and the greater part of the interior, Mr. R—— led the way to a small apartment adjoining the hall, and looking towards the gardens in front of the house. Here were many books; in fact, it was the library. The volumes it contained, Mr. R—— told us, had been chiefly collected by an uncle of his, since dead, who was partial to literature; and being also somewhat of an antiquary, had been a careful preserver of all the old family deeds, leases, letters, parchments, records, &c. &c. The books spoke at once the character of their late proprietor; they were full of marginal notes, in his own handwriting; some of

which, connected with the family, I was allowed to copy in my note book. Mr. R——, anxious to afford us all the information we could desire respecting the former inhabitants of Warleigh, produced a bundle of old brown dusty parchments, containing records as far back as the reign of King Stephen. Most of them were in Latin, and in a character cramped, worn, and almost illegible in many places. These were far beyond my antiquarian skill to decypher; and, like one who travels in a country with the language of which he is unacquainted, I could only admire, without understanding, the very things that lay before my sight. On some of the parchments there were curious seals, in a high state of preservation. Here and there I could make out a word or a line that rather piqued than gratified curiosity, till I was, at length, obliged to give up the investigation, and could only regret how much information I must lose by not being able to read old writings and monkish Latin.

However, though I failed here, I was successful in reading the plain fair hand of the

deceased antiquary ; and, on carelessly looking over a bundle of papers—having permission to open any I pleased — my attention was at once arrested by seeing a *very small packet*, carefully tied up with pink tape. It would be needless, perhaps, to tell the reader, that this was a packet of exciting interest. I was allowed to gratify my curiosity ; and, though I confess the information it contained might be less full than could have been desired, still was it sufficient to excite and stimulate imagination. The following pages owe their existence to the few, but remarkable, facts connected with the tradition of the Coppleson Oak, which thus became known to me : and as, in all works of fiction, nothing adds so much to their interest as a knowledge of their being founded on truth, I thought it better to relate the above particulars for the satisfaction of my readers. Man seems born with an innate love of truth ; it is natural to him : for, if you relate a tale but to a child, the first remark that passes his lips, as he stands looking with wonder in your face, will be — “ Is it all true ? ”

I have but one more observation to make respecting the traditionary lore on which some parts of the following narrative are founded; and that is, to tell the reader that I am aware one circumstance of the tale borders on the marvellous: nor do I pretend to argue the point of its truth with any critic who may feel disposed to be sceptical on the subject. It appears to have been communicated, like other legends, to the intelligent antiquary of Warleigh, by one who had received it from his grandfather, as an accredited and undoubted fact; and whose venerable progenitor, possibly in like manner, might have traced it up to the fountain head, through successive generations. Be it false or true, it was an oral tradition, and, as such, was sufficient for my purpose, especially as it will be found connected with the spirit of former manners and times.

The following narrative, however, I ought to remark, is but little concerned with events of a public nature; not more so than must ever be the case in the history of every family, who may have the misfortune to live in troublesome

times, and to learn the truth of an observation which avers, that private happiness cannot hope for security during public dissensions and calamity.

A. E. B.

Vicarage, Tavistock,
Nov. 1. 1830.

CHAPTER I.

'Tis pleasant, by the cheerful hearth, to hear
Of tempests, and the dangers of the deep,
And pause at times, and feel that we are safe;
Then listen to the perilous tale again,
And with an eager and suspended soul
Woo terror to delight us.

SOUTHEY'S *Madoc*.

THE Eddystone Light-house has long been celebrated, not only as the most remarkable structure of the kind in this kingdom, but, perhaps, in the whole world. The dangerous reef of rocks on which it stands, surrounded and, in a storm, covered, by roaring breakers, is supposed to derive its name from the number of contrary eddies that here meet, and strive amidst their deep and dark abysses. These rocks are distant at least twelve miles from the coast of Devon, entirely insulated, and lying directly in the way of such vessels as may chance to coast the Channel.

To have approached them at any time, unless under the guidance of an experienced pilot, must have been hazardous ; but during a dark night, or in a gale of wind, no other than certain destruction ; nay, seldom in former times could any vessel, during a storm, escape the fatal reef, did she attempt to reach Plymouth harbour amid the hours of darkness. Dangerous, toilsome, and almost impracticable as it seemed, yet the genius of man triumphed over the difficulties presented by the Eddystone ; for in the year 1696, Winstanley, the Merlin of his age, erected upon it a light-house, which, having withstood several tremendous assaults from the tempestuous ocean—that once, it is said, hurled its waves more than a hundred feet above the fabric, cresting with foam its burning top—the founder deemed was as capable of endurance as the rocks on which it stood. With too much presumption, perhaps, on his own skill, and too little thought of God’s power to overthrow the strongest works of man at his pleasure, he even expressed a wish, that the first time he visited the light-house, the greatest

storm might blow that ever shook the heavens. The wish, rashly formed, was too soon, and too fatally gratified; for the floods arose, and “the Most High uttered his voice, and the channels of the sea appeared,” and the strong walls and their unfortunate founder were swept away together; so that, when the sun arose, nothing was to be seen but a few black specks amid the breakers; even the rocks, which remained firm and unshaken, and, alas! as destructive as ever. The light-house which now stands on the reef, was erected by Smeaton, on a better planned foundation, at a subsequent period: and in here adverting either to the one or the other building, we certainly have been guilty of digressing, since what we have to detail, respecting the dangers of the Eddystone rocks, refers to a period *before* Winstanley achieved his bold and surprising work, — when not a year passed without fearful and multiplied losses of ships, cargoes, and human lives, on the most fatal reef that skirted the western coast.

It was during the vernal equinox of the year 1647, that two English merchant vessels, the

one called the Virginia, and the other the Old James, heavily laden, and homeward bound from the western Indies, were making their way through a stormy sea in a very distressed condition. The Virginia, however, was, to use a nautical phrase, more "seaworthy" than her companion; and it is with the fortunes of the Old James that we are here principally concerned. The latter ship had already suffered by a tempest, and it seemed but too probable that she was destined still to suffer more (perhaps complete wreck) near that very coast to which she had looked with an eye of longing and of hope.

The particulars that, at this distant period, have reached us respecting the distresses of the Old James are but few, yet sufficiently fearful; and, according to the credulity of the times, have not been forgotten the various signs and bad omens (some of them being nothing more than natural phenomena observed at sea) which were considered as indicative of what was to happen. First, then, the vessel had set sail on a Friday, and without taking the precaution of

nailing a horse-shoe on the foremast, to keep off the witches, who soon profited by the omission; and giving their imps and familiars possession of the masts and rigging, they speedily capered about, and played up what was called "a devil's mass" on board the ship. For several nights together strange and sweet sounds were heard about the sides of the vessel; yet no mermaid, no sea minstrel appeared seated on a dolphin's back, chanting her wild melodies as she combed down her long locks of silken hair. But though the musicians were invisible, there was seen an unknown aquatic bird, that settled on the mast head, or hovered round the ship during many days: the seamen attempted, by more than once firing at it, to get rid of so singular a visitant; but the bird, as if proof against danger, seemed neither hurt nor dismayed by these hostile attempts upon her life.

There was also seen playing about the vessel a light, like that of a small star, which would appear and tremble, and anon disappear, and then would come again and stream with a brilliant flame along the mast, shooting from

“shroud to shroud,” darting, flaring, or blazing like Ariel in the Tempest, and, like that “dainty spirit,” might be said sometimes

“To flame amazement ; sometimes to divide,
And burn in many places.”

Setting aside the credulity of the age, we presume these lights to have been nothing more than a “sea fire,” not unfrequently witnessed before, as well as during, a violent storm ; certainly ominous of any thing but calm seas and hopeful weather. In the present instance, these prognostics had been followed by a formidable tempest, that had dreadfully distressed the ship. For many days she had laboured in a hollow sea, partly dismasted ; and, at the time she neared land, remained little better than a hulk, at the mercy of those winds and waves that seldom exert their full powers in angry conjunction but for destruction. During the last twenty-four hours, the storm had been so violent, that it seemed to the minds of the unfortunate crew as if it

could scarcely be worse ; yet worse it was, and that speedily : for the tempest, which hitherto had made itself felt by sudden bursts and squalls, now became more constant in its terrors, as the winds rose higher and higher in their fury. Though it was noonday, yet was there darkness ; a “ thick darkness,” like that of Egypt, which could be felt as well as seen.

In the extreme distance, a red streaky line of light, as of blood, gave a distinguishing character of horror to the horizon. The clouds, vast, black, and spreading, seemed in that state of agitation which made them resemble the stormy sea, over which they cast their awful shadows, as a worker of wicked spells and foul enchantments is said to cast the shadow of his body over the creature whom he destines to perform his destructive will. Onward they came, rolling from the west, in volumes of darkness, yet surcharged with the electric elements of light. At one moment they were black as midnight, at the next a sheet of fire, as the redoubling thunder burst at intervals in

fearful combination with the roar of ocean and of the wind that, loud, steady, and appalling, howled along the deep. The sea seemed to rise and dash its waves against the sky, whilst the rain poured down in such a flood, as if “the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up.” By the sudden gleams of lightning, shot from east to west, the boiling surges might be seen afar off in the distance, so that there was no circumstance of the tempest but what disclosed a scene of terror even to the brave. Sometimes the vivid flashes were followed by utter darkness, when the ear alone conveyed to the mind those awful impressions, to which the eye, but a moment before, had also borne fearful witness.

The ship was now in a most perilous state; but one mast left, and that in such a condition that if the seamen attempted but to hoist a hollyock to guide her before the seas, “truly it required,” says the record I have consulted, “ten men to hold the whipstaffe in order to keep it right; so terrible was the power of

those angry waters." Labouring and rolling, gunwale to, for want of sufficient sail to render her steady, the only mast left speedily came by the board, and the fate of the Old James seemed inevitable. The scene which now presented itself was truly dreadful. No hope of safety remained ; for, as if no circumstance of calamity that can befall a vessel should be wanting to complete her ruin, at this moment it was discovered she had sprung a leak, and was four feet deep in water above her ballast. Despair, with its companion distraction, seized on most who were on board. In the midst of the hurry and confusion of the moment, shrieks and prayers, such as despair alone could utter, mingled fearfully with the screaming of the tempest. The shouts, too, of the captain and his mates might be heard, as, even in these last moments, they attempted to give orders to such of the crew as would yet hear and obey their commands. And as the sea rolled its mountain waves, (now lifting the vessel upon their summits, and then, as they rushed back, leaving her little more than a log floating in

the hollow trough thus formed by their retiring,) those few merchants or traffickers who were on board, fearing the next plunge would be the last, might be seen, eagerly and readily helping, with their own hands, to cast overboard those very bales of goods on which, but a little while before, they deemed their fortunes depended. But now, death being at hand, they parted from them to enrich the ocean caves, as readily as did ever a trembling suppliant cast down rich gifts to appease the anger of some haughty tyrant from whose power there is no escaping.

The water still increasing in the hold, many hardy fellows stripped themselves almost naked, and, though spent and worn with suffering, toiled at the pumps with incessant exertion, as if a few hours of life (for more than a few hours the vessel could not struggle against so many evils) were to be purchased with as much earnestness and zeal as the eternity that lay before them, and to which they might so soon find entrance. The sea now dashed over the decks in huge breakers, and covered the ship

from stem to stern, washing away the helmsman, who had in vain attempted to keep her from a direction towards the reef.

At this moment some few persons, bent on self-preservation, determined to take their chance in the long boat; though, in such a sea, it was little better than madness to hope it could live. Of the two, indeed, it seemed most probable that the long boat would founder before the ship. Not more than eight persons were hardy enough to venture the experiment. One of these was an elderly man, who, though he had determined on taking his own risk, was nevertheless desirous to persuade a young person, who seemed to be his companion, to remain on board. The youth expressed his determination to follow; and, having ejaculated a short prayer for mercy and protection, was the last who leaped on board the boat, as a seaman let go the rope by which she had been lowered from the vessel; for there was great danger, lest, on the return of the wave, the boat should be upset by dashing against the side of the ship.

The vessel, after the boat had quitted her,

continued her course; but scarcely had a quarter of an hour elapsed than a shrill cry was heard of, — “Breakers ahead!” All rushed on deck, and in less than five minutes the ship struck on the Eddystone reef. So tremendous was the shock, that it opened her stern; and the waves, like so many howling dogs, when the game is hunted down, rushed in upon the miserable vessel, as if eager to devour their prey. There was no hope; and all now saw their fate was inevitable, yet not immediate. What an interval for the sufferers! The thunder, “that deep and dreadful organ pipe,” seemed in mockery to return the groans and cries of agony that rose and mingled with the roar of the waves, as they came rolling on, raising on all sides their towering heads, as executioners who advance to do their office; whilst the heavens, that appeared “all on fire” with sheets of lightning, only dispelled the darkness of that fatal hour to show a dreadful scene — a boundless and devouring deep.

Amongst the sufferers, many on board were of the puritanic sect of the times. These,

thinking it their duty to die rejoicing in defiance of the pangs of nature, and the terror of the tempest, were determined to depart, as the swan is said to do, with melody on their lips. With bitter tears and quavering voices they commenced the old hymn of —

“ Help, Lord, for us, thy godly men,”

whilst the not less sincere, but more mutely resolute, breathed their parting prayer in silence to Him, who, in the midst of the wildest tempest, hears the whisper of repentance in the secret soul, as heedfully as a mother who listens to the breathings of her infant's rest. But not all died thus. There were those on board to whom death was indeed “ a snare,” as the “ sorrows of hell ” compassed them about. In those dread moments the sinner quailed, and the flashes of the terrific lightning that shot before his sight were less terrible than the flashes of his own conscience, which now showed distinctly every dark and damning spot of crime. And some poor sea-boy on board, now shed, perhaps, a bitter tear, as the thoughts

of his mother's care, of his father's cot and field, his labours of the plough and harrow, crossed his mind. And then came self-reproach, that told him he had left them all to run away to sea; and God, may be, thus punished him for his disobedience; for the dying seldom fail to find Providence a just accountant. And who shall say but on the borders of eternity the mind may have an opening, some faint discernment of those ways of the Almighty, which, so long as we are here, are, indeed, past finding out? Many a poor mariner, who was a husband, thought upon his wife, and called on God to bless her and his children, to preserve the desolate and the fatherless.

A few desperate persons cast themselves overboard on hen-coops, oars, spars, or any thing that came in their way. These were the first to meet their fate; for such as, being able swimmers, the waters did not instantly drown, were dashed upon the reef. In a few minutes the ship that had been battered by the rocks, as the breakers rolled over her their foaming eddies, split and went to pieces.

The Virginia, that narrowly escaped the dangers of the Eddystone, and lived through the tempest, now heard a wild and fearful shriek as of a hundred souls—it was the death-cry of the crew. In another minute nothing was to be seen but the black rocks and the foaming breakers that indicated the fatal reef. The roaring eddy had closed over that spot, where so many had breathed their last. A few days after a shattered stern-post that was washed on shore, and supposed by its make and fashion to have been that of a West Indian merchantman, was all that ever came to land of the wreck of the Old James.

CHAP. II.

But, alas, for his country ! her pride is gone by,
And that spirit is broken which never would bend :
O'er the ruin her children in secret must sigh ;
For 'tis treason to love her, and death to defend.
Unprized are her sons, till they 've learn'd to betray ;
Undistinguish'd they live, if they shame not their sires ;
And the torch that would light them through dignity's way
Must be caught from the pile where their country expires.

MOORE'S *Irish Melodies*.

THE course of our narrative now obliges us to shift the scene of action from sea to land ; and to conduct the reader to a spot so enchanting, so variedly beautiful, that it is traditionally averred, that when the Spanish admiral, Medina Sidonia, who saw it but from a distance, led to our shores the Armada, in the hope of conquest, he had anticipatively appropriated to his own share of the spoil the matchless domain of Mount Edgcumbe.

Indeed, so great is its beauty, that though it becomes necessary to our narrative that we

should here say something of its localities, yet we feel our weakness in undertaking the task; and fear our attempt, brief as it must be, will but appear as so many words of praise, without conveying any adequate idea of scenes so far beyond our power to delineate. We fear we may be like a certain pupil of Apelles, who, when he painted a Helen, loaded her with jewels; a circumstance which drew from his celebrated master the remark, “to make her as beautiful as she ought to be was beyond thy skill, and therefore hast thou made her fine.”

Having said this by way of apology to our reader, we shall now proceed to tell him, that the peninsula of Mount Edgcumbe stretches out its majestic heights, crowned by the noblest woods, into the ocean; where the waves break over reefs of black rock that lie at the base of the cragged cliffs, as they stand, to use the lively figure of Carrington, “crowned by groups of pines that start wildly up, tossing their dark hair on the breeze of the night.” Here beauty and grandeur, pleasant woods and sunny glades, deep hollows and hanging rocks, the wild path

midst precipice and chasm, the lofty pine, unshaken by a thousand storms, the roar of ocean, the lengthened pomp of avenues and groves, with their deep recesses of shadow and repose, all, all combine to form scenes such as would raise to ecstasy a mind imbued with the love of nature, and would give, even to the sluggish and the dull, feelings before unknown of wonder and delight. At the date of our narrative, the mansion at Mount Edgcumbe was inferior in size and magnificence to what it has now become, under the directing taste of the present noble and talented representative of the Edgcumbe family. It was, at the time we describe it, a somewhat heavy building, square in form, having a round battlemented turret at each corner, and a handsome entrance in the centre, which led into the hall, the largest and best apartment, "yielding," as old Prince says, "a stately sound as you enter the same." The house stood on a rising ground of considerable elevation, that swept down in a lawn of the finest turf to the water's edge on the north, or, as it might be called, inland side of the penin-

sula, as it was there only separated from the opposite towns of Stonehouse and Plymouth by the waters of the Tamar. On either side of the lawn, that was spacious in extent, an avenue of stately elms led up to the house from the landing-place by the river. In the immediate vicinity of the dwelling might be seen groves of the loftiest trees, composed of the oak, the beech, the pine, with chestnuts and cedars, noble and spreading in their forms, venerable with antiquity. Having thus briefly sketched the situation of the house and its vicinity, we proceed to say a word or two about the owner of this delightful spot at the time of our tale.

Sir Piers Edgcumbe was one of those royalists who in the west of England had been the first to take up arms, and almost the last to lay them down, in the service of King Charles. He was a middle-aged gentleman of great estimation; high in honour, resolute in conduct, patient in suffering innumerable hardships and afflictions, and of a courage and devotion so absolute in the cause he served, that it obtained for him the title of a desperate malignant, and the consequent

reward of being persecuted and heavily fined after the parliament had got the upper hand in the west. Though his estate was diminished by these exactions, yet as it had been originally very large, he still retained a considerable property, far more than usually fell to the lot of a royalist who had undergone what was called "a merciful settlement of his delinquency."

Such had been the conduct and suffering of Sir Piers. He well knew how many had fared worse; some being stripped of all they had, like the greater part of the sequestered clergy, who were sent to roam about the wide world with nothing but the gown upon their backs, and their starving families by their side, to live or die, as it might happen, in the open fields: whilst others were crammed into the suffocating dens of prison ships, or gaols as wretched on shore; and not a few kidnapped abroad or sold into Turkish slavery; or sometimes hanged, if no other way remained of getting rid of them.

Sir Piers well knew these things; for many a friend had he lost in one or each of these miserable ways during the triumph of the par-

liament for having so happily opened the path, and set the example, to England's liberty. Sir Piers was grateful, therefore, for his own comparatively good fortune ; and as nothing softens the human heart to the sufferings of others so much as having ourselves tasted of affliction, even so did the persecution of the good knight greatly improve not only his Christian patience but his temper. We have somewhere seen the improvement of an afflicted soul beautifully compared to a diamond that has passed through the process of cutting and polishing. Every cut was a wound to the precious stone ; but without them, where would have been its lustre ? One of the chief failings in the character of Sir Piers had been, perhaps, too much pride in himself, and too little value for those beneath him. But this original defect was wisely chastened ; and, like a good Christian, who, on being conscious of a fault, conceives it is not enough to condemn without struggling to overcome it, Sir Piers had so practically dealt by his own besetting sin as to have much subdued it. And though he was chary of his dignity, so as not to

admit the freedom of bold or low-bred persons, yet to the loyal, the unfortunate, who had private worth, as well as public principle, to recommend them, he was a most generous friend and liberal benefactor, whatever might be their degree. But for *his* bounty many a poor royalist must have perished from want; and even those who only suffered by reduced worldly means found so much comfort, such a cheering relief to their feelings, and such a supply of the little luxuries of life, that habit had rendered almost necessary, at his table, that to be admitted as a social guest, an occasional companion, at Mount Edgcumbe, was an indulgence felt even as a blessing in such times. Indeed, Sir Piers had always been a friendly man, being peculiarly well adapted by nature to become that excellent character, since he was not a selfish man. There could not be a stronger proof of this, than the fact, that high or low, rich or poor, rejoiced to live near him; so that if a house or a farm was to be sold or let, in the vicinity of Sir Piers, the proprietor had only to follow the example of Themistocles, (who, it is recorded, when intend-

ing to sell a farm to advantage, caused it to be proclaimed that it had a good neighbour,) and he was sure to meet a willing purchaser.

To one friend, indeed, Sir Piers was remarkably kind, from motives of compassion mingled with the highest esteem and regard. This more than ordinarily favoured friend was no less a person than the famous loyalist of the west, Sir Hugh Piper; to whose tomb, in the beautiful church of St. Magdalen at Launceston, we once made a pilgrimage; and where the worthy knight, with his Dame Sibylla, may be seen in monumental pomp; the one in armour, and the other in brocade, "very livelily represented," to use a phrase of the time, "all in marble," and, like godly souls, as they were, kneeling and praying opposite to each other; perhaps in thankfulness for that restoration, which, it is recorded, they both lived to witness in their old age. To return from this digression respecting the knight's effigies to the knight himself.

Sir Hugh Piper in early life had been bred to commerce, and became a great Plymouth merchant, dealing largely in the commodities of

the West Indies, where he held property exclusively his own. By these means he acquired wealth and consequence sufficient to wed his Dame Sibylla, who was of a family superior to his; indeed, so ancient, that they could boast of having had grandfathers so long back as the Conquest; and, by an inter-marriage with the noble house of Courtenay, of Devon, claimed affinity even with the emperors of Constantinople. The English merchant, at all times a respectable character, rose into great importance during the successive reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I.; a more convincing proof of the opulence of his class could not be given than by that erection, equally useful and munificent, —the Royal Exchange of Sir Thomas Gresham, built at his sole cost, during the reign of the maiden queen.

Sir Hugh Piper felt the importance of his character, and supported the consequence he had thus acquired, without giving umbrage to those towards whom he ascended, in the scale of equality, by the influence of his growing wealth; for he never assumed the bustling airs

new gentlemen are apt to put on. He always remembered the time when he was apprenticed to his old master, and sat on a high stool in a little back counting-house, pricking down items, as the phrase then went, in a calves-skin ledger book, from Monday morning till Saturday night. This recollection sobered him, if, for a moment, he felt some natural exultation at hearing it said, as he often did, that he was considered rich enough to buy half the families in the county, out and out, if it came to a point of money. Neither did he offend his inferiors; for he was ever kind and civil to those of his own degree, who, less fortunate, or less prudent than himself, were left behind him on the ground spoke of Fortune's wheel. He had been amongst those who suffered by, and loudly complained of, the several oppressive and arbitrary acts concerning duties on merchandise, tonnage, poundage, and ship-money; all acts that had been enforced, though certainly contrary to law, and unsanctioned by the parliament.

But when he found that the complaints made

against these things, and other abuses of the government, were to be carried on as an excuse, or cover, for the worst designs of the most artful men; that the destruction of monarchy was aimed at, and that all order in church and state was to give place to the wild schemes of fanaticism, violence, and ambition, Sir Hugh Piper changed at once his sad-coloured russet suit for a goodly case of armour; turned his office into a guard-room; named his head clerk cornet elect; threw aside his steeple-crowned hat for a morion of steel, and raised a troop of horse for King Charles at his own and sole cost; heading the same himself, with a leading staff in hand, and a sword by his side, as if he had been born and bred a soldier; and few learned the art of war more vigorously, and none practised it more bravely, than did this truly honest merchant.

Great were his successes, and as great were his honours; for, though the siege of Plymouth gave him a wound in the neck, the king created him captain of the royal castle at Exeter, where he might, in those days, overlook the

whole town, without the trouble of stretching it. And though at Stratton heights a brace of bullets whizzed through his thigh, yet being appointed constable of Launceston Castle was (as this good soldier would say, when playing upon the word,) an elevation to a height greater than that on which he had received his wound; and, though lastly, a severe cut from the godly sword of a psalm-singing knave at Lansdown fight had made his shoulders smart for it, yet this third blow Charles himself condescended to heal, by giving him another, which carried with it a balm to cure its own smart, and made of a very gallant soldier a very worshipful knight.

For all these repeated and high honours, Sir Hugh was not ungrateful; and as gratitude at any court is seldom declined when it comes in a substantial form, so, in that of the unfortunate Charles, it was often all he had to depend upon to supply his immediate wants. Thus, when affairs stood still, or drooped, in the west, for want of money to raise and fit out a company of men, Sir Hugh Piper's West India cottons,

sugars, and rums, soon clothed the half-ragged recruits, and enabled them to drink healths, pottle deep, to the King. And when the beautiful Queen, Henrietta Maria, was fearful for want of that rare thing — gold, she should bring a royal infant into the world, with a state and ceremony as bare as its own nakedness, Sir Hugh Piper's silver dishes, plates, caudle drinking cups, and ladles, all went to the melting-pot, to furnish forth royal bedding and baby clothes, fees for wise women, possets for nurses, and spoons for godmothers and gossips, at the royal Exeter lying-in of the queen.

But these were the halcyon days of Sir Hugh ; for, so long as he had gold, who was more welcome at court, or who more active in the field ? But, when *that* failed, there came “ a long farewell to all his greatness.” The court, lords, and ladies, looked coldly upon the West India cotton dealer ; and the gay Lord St. Jermyn (who made up in smiles for what he wanted in wit) hesitated not to smile our gallant merchant out of countenance, when he honestly complained that his welcome had de-

clined in proportion to his purse. Sometimes, also, Sir Hugh had supplied the means to furnish forth the court revelry, to prevent its growing dull in these melancholy times, lest there should be no sports to cheer men's fainting spirits. But now, alas! it was found, to Sir Hugh's cost (and, to use a pun of his own, when adverting to the circumstance), that though the court had danced, there was no one to pay the piper. Even Charles himself, whose kind-heartedness could not bear the sight of the distress he had occasioned, and had no power to relieve, felt so much vexation at the long melancholy face, the worn doublet, and altered appearance of honest Sir Hugh, that his presence became painful to him. And the sovereign likewise recollecting how much he owed to this good subject (and how impossible it was, in the present state of his affairs, to command one shilling to repay him), could now never even see the poor man without thinking of a debt; a kind of recollection, from the family improvidence of the Stuarts towards their friends, so very disagreeable, that it became exceedingly

distressing to Sir Hugh himself; so that, rather than vex the king by remaining in his sight, he turned upon his heel, left Oxford and the court behind him, and determined, if he could no more serve Charles, except by dealing out hard blows, there should be no lack of them, so long as he could find a Nollite willing to exchange such rough wares with him, either in public or in private traffic.

But here, alas ! he was again disappointed. Few were the men, amongst the common sort, whose loyalty could stand by him, or could warm their own hearts when there was no sack nor strong ale to keep up the fire in the blood. His troop of horse murmured for want of pay ; and though Sir Hugh sold all he had left that was immediately marketable, by way of giving them something in hand, and talked to them incessantly about “ devotion to the royal cause,” “ love of the church,” his own zeal, and stores forthcoming from the western Indies, yet the rogues were unsatisfied, grew mutinous ; and whilst they were clamouring for “ filthy lucre,” some cunning agitator, or independent (usually

employed on such occasions to step in and stir up strife), whispered in their ears, that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush; and that good pay and free quarters were awaiting them under the blue flag of the parliament: so that, before twelve hours were past, the agents of old Noll had them, body and soul, in his service; and by the rigour of his discipline, held them there, as fast bound as a certain dark personage is said to do by the luckless spirit of some wizard, who makes a compact with him to answer his present purposes of evil.

All these things were enough “to weigh a royal merchant down;” and not long did the brave Sir Hugh resist the torrent so as to hold his head above water. He was thus shamefully deserted by his troop, by that very troop, which, like the work of an alchymist, had grown out of his own art and labour; for by his unremitting skill and pains, he had converted them from a ragged rascally set of clowns into a good company of well-armed, able-bodied, and disciplined men. But the evil did not stop with their desertion, and Sir Hugh soon after paid

the penalty for his own loyalty and the base treachery by which it was rendered unavailing. He was seized, imprisoned, and reviled, his remaining estates confiscated, and not till the private interest of a friend, on the opposite side, had exerted itself to get him off for a fine that amounted to nearly all his property abroad as well as at home, did he once more see the blessed sun, saving by the peep he might obtain of it, through the narrow slit and iron bars of the walls of his prison.

At length he was once more his own master ; and still possessed a few things he could call his own ; namely, his liberty, his wife, a daughter, grown to woman's estate, and a degree of poverty he had not only never before known, but never even anticipated. His pride was wounded when he saw himself, after all his industry, reduced to beggary ; and oh ! stern and unrelenting fortune, to what degradation may not those who experience thy frowns be reduced ! since at the time we open this chapter, Sir Hugh Piper, the once rich merchant, the noble constable, the gallant soldier, the liberal

friend and benefactor of princes, was so reduced, so humbled, as to have begun the world again, on the verge of age, and in the effort to raise a second fortune, in no higher a mercantile employment than that of keeper of a store, to supply the shipping with necessaries at Plymouth. In plain English, the poor knight was become nothing more than a common ship chandler, and that in a very small way. Esteem for his character, respect for his past gallant services, and pity for his misfortunes, made this so humbled gentleman to be selected as the favoured friend and frequent companion of the generous Sir Piers Edgcumbe. After having thus given our reader some insight into the disposition and history of this worthy, we shall finish by a sketch of his outward figure. In order to render this task the more easy, we would entreat him if he possesses Lodge's splendid work on the biography of England, to turn to the portrait of the unfortunate Lord Capel by Anthony Vandyke. Sir Hugh Piper strongly resembled that nobleman. He was the same tall, thin, Don Quixote-like figure ;

he had the same goggle-eyed, long-visaged, lantern-jawed appearance; the same horizontal mustachios projecting on either side the mouth, not unlike the whiskers of a cat. In fine, there was in his *tout ensemble* the identical same expression of something out of the common way, that on first sight gave rise, in the stranger, to an inclination to laughter; till it was soon checked, and exchanged for a feeling of respect, by observing the free, open, kind, and honest character of his countenance, that won confidence and esteem.

His friend and patron (for so indeed he might be called), Sir Piers Edgcumbe, was a comely man; had a martial air, with chestnut-coloured mustachios, and pointed beard: wore his own hair, with two high peaks, one on either side the forehead, that gave it a most ample height, and was of the court fashion. An eye of clear blue, and open in its expression; a ruddy complexion, and an aquiline nose, completed that head which was, taken altogether, exactly such as showed to the utmost advantage in the richly laced, full, and flowing

dress that characterised the days of Charles I., and which, treated by the tasteful pencil of Vandyke, has been made of all costumes the most elegant and graceful; or, when seen with a steel corslet, to add dignity to its gracefulness, the most imposing that ever canvass handed down to the admiration of posterity.

These worthy friends, at the time we introduce them to the reader, were seated in an apartment of Mount Edgcumbe house, known by the name of the Watchet Chamber, on account of its being hung with damask, or a sort of changeable silk in waving lines, that in our day is called watered, and applied to articles of dress more than of furniture. An old vast fireplace, with a settle on either side of it, was piled with blazing logs that burnt merrily on andirons, or dogs, and sent their smoke up the huge tunnel, and sometimes into the room, as the eddies of the wind (for it was a very stormy day) blew them back again down the chimney. A number of high-backed ebony chairs, a cabinet, and sundry stools and cushions, constituted the chief furniture of the apartment;

saving that it was also distinguished by a beautiful picture of a female washing her hand under a garden fountain. This portrait represented the deceased Lady Edgcumbe, and was executed by Vandyke.

A few other pictures of merit hung, likewise, in this chamber; and there was a closet, whose door, now open, showed its contents: they spoke the character and principles of their owner; and that Sir Piers Edgcumbe was an Oxford man of the true loyal character of that distinguished university. For there might be seen, amidst hawks' bells and other nick-nacks, sundry works of too dangerous a nature to be exhibited openly on the shelves of a library — such as the “*Mercurius Academicus*,” of the loyal Doctor Swadlin of St. John's; “the Flying Horse from Oxon,” and “Pegasus taught to dance to the Tune of *Lachrymæ*,” “the Owl at Athens” in doggrel Latin verse; “the Lord have Mercy upon us,” and many other political books of the day, that, originally printed at Oxford, had all been prohibited by an ordinance of Parliament; and were now only har-

boured by such malignants as thought no ordinance so valid as that of their own conscience, which taught them to run all risks rather than give up the cause of God and the King; feeling that duty to the one demanded obedience to the other.

Sir Piers and Sir Hugh had each the happiness of being a father; and each had an only daughter about the same age, who were as intimate friends in their way as were their fathers before them. That is to say, they were both loyalists; condoled together over the misfortunes of the cavaliers; knew who were the handsomest and bravest; prayed for King Charles every night and morning; wandered over Mount Edgcumbe in company; read, sang, or played the lute together as constantly as if they had been twin born, and were seldom apart but on necessity.

Sir Piers sat with his friend, Sir Hugh, after dinner; and at the time we opened this chapter both were silent. They had played one game of chess, but neither of them feeling much in the mood for that most noble and intellectual

of all games, the pieces were left standing on the board without being called again into action: and whilst Sir Piers sat leaning his elbow on the table and looking intently at the fire, Sir Hugh, who relished much the choice tobacco he had in better days been accustomed to import from the West Indies, now reclined in his chair, enjoying its fumes in long columns of smoke, as at intervals he whiffed, and then quaffed, from a small silver cup, some spiced wine of excellent flavour that stood near him on the hospitable board. He had called on Sir Piers in the morning to ask after his health, as it was often his practice to do so, when the growing storm occasioned that good knight to insist on his remaining to dinner; an invitation that had been readily and gladly accepted by his honest-hearted and humble friend Sir Hugh.

CHAP. III.

He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
The worst that man can breathe ; and make his wrongs
His outsides ; to wear them like his raiment, carelessly,
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.

SHAKSPEARE.

As the two friends thus sat, sometimes conversing on public matters, and at others on their own, the pelting of the rain against the windows, the shrill piping of the wind, the roar of Ocean, and, now and then, a clap of thunder, like the discharge of ordnance at a distance, gave them (whilst they very naturally told each other, it was a stormy afternoon) that indefinable feeling of comfort, and self-congratulation, which all men are apt to experience whilst sitting over a warm fire, well housed and free from danger, as the pitiless storm without, tells them what their fellow-creatures must suffer who are exposed to it.

Sir Hugh talked much about it ; and told tales of the hurriances in the “ still vexed Bermudas ” Islands, which were then considered, on account of their frequent storms, as being literally given up to devils, so far as air, wind, and water, were concerned. To all this Sir Piers listened ; but not as if he felt an interest in the discourse, for his eye was still fixed on the fire, his head supported on one hand, and his foot beating upon the large square block of marble that had been dug out of one of his own quarries in Devon, and was now converted into a hearth. At length he spoke, and abruptly.

“ I have been thinking, Sir Hugh Piper,” said he to his friend, “ that I have at last fathomed the cause of this sad failure in Kent. Hales, and those noble gentlemen who dared in the very teeth of the Parliament to assemble themselves together, to issue commissions in his Majesty’s name, and finally awaited but the hour when to strike a blow for the deliverance of our sovereign, would never thus have failed, but that they wanted prudence

to temper their zeal. Their plan was good ; but their execution of it hasty and imperfect ; they should have watched till other counties were ready to join them, and then have struck the blow. I know not where this will end. To my thinking it is check mate with the king (he took up the royal piece from the board as he spoke), unless something is done, and that suddenly. What think you of these matters ?”

“ What do I think ?” replied Sir Hugh, “ as I have long thought, that, like the great hurricane, which, in the year forty-two, destroyed all my crop of canes, such evils come not by chance : for the sins of the kingdom are we visited with these woes ; it is no otherwise ; and yet am I no Puritan who speak it. We say the Parliament did that, or the Parliament undid this ; but I say the devil did it, who, like as he had empire given to try the patience of faithful Job by sore afflictions and calamities, even so now has he the spirit of the Parliament given to him to try the patience of our suffering King.”

“ It is too true,” said Sir Piers.

“ We see a fellow like Cromwell busy to do evil, and call it good,” continued Sir Hugh ; “ but what is he more than a “ Jack in the clock house,’ that strikes when the hour comes ? but the devil is in the wheel that moves the machinery. I have no patience with the times ; and that men should thus sit down quietly, even as we do now, when such things are acting. Where is honour ? Where is place ? Why if Lucifer himself were in heaven, he would not dare to sit on the throne of the Most High ; but verily do I think that he is in the parliament ; and there sits he on the King’s throne, with no more reverence than if it were an ale bench.”

“ In the parliament !” exclaimed Sir Piers, who caught the warm tone with which his companion had concluded his last speech, “ rather say in the army ; for what now is the Parliament better than a pack of hounds, that have hunted down the royal game at the cry of their leader, and are speedily whipped off like curs when no longer wanted for his profit ! I tell thee, the Parliament played the part of an old wizard,

raised a devil, whose name is Legion: but not all the art of all the parliaments combined could lay him, so long as he leads an army at his beck. What a man is Cromwell! I could almost find it in my heart to applaud him for his very daring, and the power with which he carried on rebellion, usurpation, tyranny! for doth not the poet say — respect for his great place, and let the devil be sometimes honoured for his burning throne?”

“ Oliver Cromwell,” said Sir Hugh, “ always reminds me of a pirate ship, that rides the high seas under false colours to draw in the unwary, till a royal merchantman comes in sight; then your pirate pounces upon her at once, boards, or makes conditions, as if he carried the law of the high seas in his own bottom; and often does he sink the ship, after rifling her of all her wealth. Thus has Cromwell done by the good bark of Britain’s sovereignty; and I wish that he may spare the captain, who so long stood at the helm and defied the storm. But he, alas, is now captive! — a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, whilst a kingdom looks on, and make

an idol of him who has turned on the very prince in whose behalf he affected to take up arms !”

“Nay, for the matter of that,” said Sir Piers, “he is more feared than loved ; for, trust me, there are those of his own party who would never thus submit to be ruled by him, were it not for his army, his agitators, his levellers, and his psalm-singing swash-bucklers, whom he has so clad in iron, that they are called his lobsters to express their casing ! I say again, it is fear that rules men’s minds as they look on Cromwell. It is fear which has caused the late calm ; but as a learned and ejected pastor said to me but last week — ‘ like those of the dead sea, such calms are a curse.’ Oh, England ! England ! when I look on thee, I could weep for the madness of thy people. Thou hadst a sovereign, mild, good, and righteous ; some faults, the faults of humanity, and of his great state, were his. But what were these, arbitrary though they might be, when compared to the arbitrary acts of his predecessors ?

Yet not satisfied, you have plucked down this sweet lovely rose, and planted there ——”

“ A bottle-nosed old roundhead, said Sir Hugh, interrupting the elegant quotation of his friend, “ who is as cunning as a fox and as fierce as a tiger. Why there would be no end to the catalogue did I rehearse his qualities. Imprimis, he hath no birth nor elevation to recommend him ; but then he is full willing to raise others, therefore is he a friend to the gallows, for many an honest cavalier hath he hanged, as high as Haman, for no sin but that of loyalty. Secondly, he loves not to see men exalt themselves ; therefore doth he trample on all his betters. He would have freedom for all men : no doubt freedom in spirit ; for the bodies of such as would be troublesome to him are fast locked by him in prison. He would have no arbitrary taxes ; no monopolies by kings ; and, to prevent the possibility of this sin, hath he hurled down the king, laid the strong hand on all estates, whilst your committee men and sequestrators act as jackalls to the lion.”

“ And bring all flesh to his den,” said Sir Piers.

“ And then for quarrelling, who is like him ?” continued the vehement Sir Hugh : “ why he quarrelled with all the bishops ; ay and with the judges to boot, for the loss of Pryn’s ears ; and so in requital he strikes you off a score or two of heads, and says his prayers for it before breakfast. And then the King, the King would have an army of papists to make poor England bleed ! and he, forsooth, to prevent this evil, calls up an army of his own, that would tear out her very heart, and open her in every vein at the call of his ambition : whilst, in order to reform religion, and out of love to God’s church, he has made it poor, and suffering, and naked ; turned out her learned men and holy ministers, to let in a rascal-crew of schismatics and heretics, composed of tailors, weavers, tinkers, cobblers, and hedge-ranters, who deem the ravings of ignorance prophetic ! call a turning of God’s word to vile purposes — expounding the truth ! fancy every bewildering imagination raised by the fumes of ale and

tobacco to be — an outpouring of the spirit ! and tell God Almighty the news from their pulpits, for fear he should not know fast enough the work they had been doing for their masters.”

“ It is too true,” said Sir Piers, “ the word of God has been perverted to the worst purposes, not only by the civil but by the military religionists.”

“ Did not that military rascal, that agitator, independent, what do ye call him — Captain Butler, at his last holding forth, did not even he dare ask the King of heaven and earth, in the presence of his congregation, if a godly sacrifice, and an acceptable one, was not bound to the horns of the altar, inasmuch as his precious saints held in bonds the blood-thirsty Dagon, Charles Stuart, in the castle of Carisbrook ? My blood boils while I but think of it,” continued Sir Hugh, striking one hand on the table, as he flourished his pipe in the other ; “ and if there could be but found a dozen of honest fellows, who would join me, I would even once again draw my sword, and venture a

bold stroke to get the King out of their clutches before it is too late."

"Say you so, neighbour?" cried Sir Piers, with an air of triumph, "why then will I even take you at your word; for know there *are* those in the west who watch as well as pray for the safety of the King; and who, even now, are silently, secretly, and, I trust, surely carrying on a scheme for his deliverance. Thou knowest Captain John Burley, of the Burley family in the South Hams?"

"I know him," said Sir Hugh, "a gallant gentleman: he fought at Landsdown with Sir Bevil Grenville, that jewel of the west, that glory of Devon, who bit the dust with many a brave man in that day's field. I know him: Burley nearly lost his own life in attempting to be avenged for the loss of his friend and fellow-countryman. What of him?"

"His loyalty lost him his estate and his commission: he retired into the Isle of Wight, and there he lives like a poor gentleman, having more respect than means: he lives nigh to Carisbrook Castle."

“ So near the captive King !” replied Sir Hugh, “ then has Charles one friend at least in that island of durance.”

“ I trust his Majesty has many,” said Sir Piers, “ and Captain Burley purposes, on a fitting moment, to make trial of them ; that is, if we in the west will hold ourselves in readiness to receive the royal fugitive, should it be found impossible, or highly dangerous to attempt his passage across the water into France ; for so great is the apprehension of his enemies that he may venture such a thing, that not a fisher’s boat can put over towards the French coast but it is boarded and searched. The west of England once more in combination to restore the King to his rights, might, on his Majesty’s sudden arrival in these parts, rouse all hearts, all arms in his cause : all might flock round his banner. Cornwall and Devon, ever true in loyalty, the first to shed their blood, and the last to retreat from death, or a good cause, Cornwall and Devon might have the glory of saving ——”

“ The King ! the King !” cried Sir Hugh,

as he struck his pipe against the table in his ecstasy; the bowl of it snapt short. "A plague on it," he said, looking on the broken tube with a vexed expression of countenance, "some roundhead made thee, or else thou wouldst never have snapt short when I did but strike with thee on this senseless table, a blow for King Charles, as I would strike his worst foe with cold iron, would he give me a fair field. — I am a fool, but I like not the omen. Small things show weightier matters; and I have not forgot those evil signs that attended the first setting up of the King's standard at Nottingham. It was a stormy evening—just such a blustering gloomy evening as this is—and Varney, the knight-marshal, rode beside the king himself to the Castle Hill. And there, mingling with the kettle-drums of the horse, the trumpets blew up a blast louder than the tempest, as Varney struck the standard into the ground, exclaiming, 'I plant thee for God and King Charles; and accursed be the hand that moves thee from thy place.' But it would not do: no hand touched it, yet the first wind that wandered by blew it down

— down to the ground ; and there were those who said that God himself had thus marked out the monarchy of Old England as a prey to the spoiler ; since by no mortal hand, but by his breath the standard had fallen, to show how vain it was, that the banner of a hundred kings, which floated on the fields of victory at Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt in the old times, and over the Spaniard at sea, and Frenchman on shore, in these latter days, should hope to stand, if he forbore to hold it up. I have never laughed at an ill omen since Varney told the tale I now repeat, as we sat prisoners together in the Tower of London ; before I recovered my liberty and lost my estate. And look you now, when once again I talk of King Charles and my sword, my old comforter, the cheerer of my prison, the companion of my musings, my tobacco-pipe snaps as I hold it in my hand.”

Sir Hugh closed his narrative of the standard with much emotion ; indeed with more emotion than the incident of the broken pipe could warrant, were not his great and repeated misfortunes considered. These had weakened his

spirits, though not his principles; for the habitually unfortunate often become the habitually timid; they start at shadows, and see evils when they do but fear them. Sir Piers observed this foolish accident had awakened, like a spark on a train of gunpowder, all the slumbering painful recollections of Sir Hugh's past calamities; and, ever kind and thoughtful, he now spoke with much feeling.

“Sir Hugh, I have done wrong, I fear, in hinting to you a plan, a mad plan, may be, which some gentlemen are not unwilling to undertake, as a last effort to rescue the King from his hard bondage. But you have suffered much, too much, already; you have escaped these tempestuous times, after having manfully struggled with them, like a shipwrecked mariner, who saves nothing but life. You are a married man, and a father; once again are you endeavouring to provide for your family a better fortune. I do you wrong to put it in hazard.”

“You do me no wrong, no wrong in the world, Sir Piers,” cried his friend, “no more wrong than when the merchants of Exeter

offered me a share in the galliasse that was to go forth on venture to the Bermudas. I accepted it, and the ship foundered; but I have ever held myself indebted to their kindness in making me a sharer of the benefit, had there been benefit, in their schemes. I have, Sir Piers,—and I hope I may be pardoned thus speaking in my own commendation, considering the occasion—but I have, Sir, once had the honour of ruining myself and family, for the King: and if I feel it a duty to do so again, I would wish to know who shall say me nay?”

“Not I, my dear Sir Hugh,” said his friend, “if such is your resolution, since I offer you no venture in which I do not share myself, to the full, the same peril. But your wife and daughter!”

“Must not be thought of, must not be named: and yet I love them both, Sir Piers, as dearly as I love the light of day, or the blood that warms my heart. But if they, too, must suffer in the cause, why, Heaven’s will be done; and if the husband and father die to serve God’s church and the King, I think not He will leave

the widow and the fatherless without comfort. So I will even trust them to Him, and not look back; but fix my eye on my duty, as the pilot does on the card, certain that it will guide him better than he could guide himself without it. But soft! we are interrupted."

"Who comes hither?" said Sir Piers, hastily rising up, as if he feared any part of their discourse should have been overheard by an evesdropper.

"'Tis I, your honour, Cornet Davy," said a voice that spoke without the door; and immediately after, Cornet Davy followed this announcement of his own name, which he had sent before him, into the room.

CHAP. IV.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away ;
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.

GOLDSMITH'S *Deserted Village*.

THE person who announced himself as Cornet Davy, was somewhat advanced in years ; had a grave and respectable appearance, a head white as wool, and a countenance as long and as dolorous as that of an undertaker. The Cornet (elevated to that station when Sir Hugh raised his troop of horse at the beginning of the Rebellion) was originally that worthy man's head clerk ; and one who, as well as presiding over the ledger, could also, in the absence of his master, bargain with foreign merchants, or with home and retail dealers. In his more noble and military capacity, Richard Davy had not entirely forgotten the habits of his original calling ; so that, notwithstanding he had displayed

much spirit and aptitude as a soldier, on the desertion of the troop (soon after the taking of Exeter by Fairfax), he very naturally and very quietly fell into his old place; not only as head, but now, alas! as sole clerk to his beloved patron, whom he still faithfully attended in his more humble and reduced traffic of a ship-chandler.

A fondness for distinction, a feeling of honour, not to be condemned, which caused him to entertain some little pride for his past brave deeds, made honest Davy still ambitious of being designated by the title of *Cornet*; though his military appellation not unfrequently led him into trouble, as he had borne it on the losing side of the question. An old sword and a brace of petronels, that had been the companions of his military career, were still cherished, as trophies of honour in a fallen cause. Like the spirit of their owner, they were ever held ready for action at the call of duty to God, the King, and Sir Hugh Piper, of loyal and noted bravery. If wishing well, and praying earnestly and watching incessantly for the welfare of King Charles, could have set him free, the zeal

alone of Cornet Davy would have done the business; and such an index was the honest man's face to the feelings of his mind, that when he daily appeared, with the *Diurnal** in one hand, and a pipe in the other, to sit an hour or so after dinner with his beloved and condescending master, Sir Hugh knew exactly how affairs stood with the King, by only looking at old Davy's face. He needed not to read a single paragraph of the *Diurnal*, to ascertain when the royalists had made a stir, had risen in arms, or were beaten by their adversaries; for Cornet Davy's looks told it all.

If any thing good happened, or only the hope of good, he seldom staid, after his gentle rap at the door, the order for its opening; but would enter the room confidently, and with a flourish of the hand in which he held the *Diurnal*, in the same manner he used to flourish his pike, he would exclaim (as his little grey eyes sparkled with delight, and every feature shone with the brightness of joy), "There! Sir Hugh, there is news worth the bringing; the Round-

* A newspaper of the time.

head rascals will have their deserts at last ; and we shall once more write C.R. in our banners without the fear of its being called a prohibited entry." But if, on the contrary, the Cornet brought bad intelligence with him, he thought it made itself known fast enough, and, therefore, was in the less haste to speak it. On such occasions he was usually silent, or would only answer Sir Hugh's enquiry of "What news, Cornet?" with a shake of the head or a long-drawn sigh, and some ejaculatory "Alack ! alack !" and "Who would have thought it ; but God's will be done ; this world is not a place for honest men, I trow," &c. &c.

It was somewhat unusual to see the Cornet had quitted his snug nook in his master's house, to find his way to Mount Edgcumbe, uncalled for, in so stormy an afternoon ; though he was by no means a stranger to the generous hospitality of Sir Piers. But no sooner had he now opened the door, and showed a face in which every feature bore the most marked expression of dismay, than Sir Hugh involuntarily started up, and asked, in the tone of one who expects

to hear bad tidings, "For God's sake, what's the matter, Davy? What brings you here?"

"The heaviest news," replied the Cornet, as he made an effort to speak with resolution, "that ever I had to tell, since I told your honour of the loss of the Double Rose and all her cargo; or that Sir Bevil Grenville was down when he charged at the head of the King's horse. I came through hail and rain, wind and storm—for I could not bide home with a bursting heart—I came on purpose, noble Sirs, to tell you both that Colchester had yielded!"

"Colchester yielded!" exclaimed Sir Piers and Sir Hugh in one breath.

"Ay, Colchester has yielded," repeated the old Cornet, "and Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle are both dead men."

"Dead!" said Sir Hugh; "I grieve to hear it. Why, they would stand at their post till the bullets flew about their ears like hail: and every Roundhead would light a match and fire his harquebuss to try which could bring down one or other of the boldest cavaliers that ever followed Prince Rupert or Prince Maurice in

these wars. As I have heard, they valiantly defended Colchester, and against odds. No doubt they fell before the post of honour."

"No, Sir Hugh," said Cornet Davy, "that they did not; they fell before a wooden post in a vile ale-yard at Colchester; where they were shot to death by order of—of that cold-blooded villain, Ireton."

"Shot to death! murdered! by Ireton's command! By Ireton, the most heartless, cruel, revengeful Roundhead of them all! Davy, this is bad news indeed: I would rather have lost my right arm, than that the King should have lost such men as these. The one famous for foresight, and the other for action to do him service. But tell thy tale, Davy; I will take patience to hear it, seeing that dead, dead, is the end of all men; for in peace or in war it comes to that at last."

"Ay, that it does, Sir Hugh," said the Cornet. "Death closes every man's account, and strikes the balance whether he will or not; and woe be to him if there is a deficit, as your honour says, of the yearly summing up. Death,

Sir Hugh, always puts me in mind of a bond debt ; it cannot be shifted, there is no vouching by security, and the principal must answer for himself."

" In truth must he, honest Davy," said Sir Hugh ; " and well is it for him when all his outstanding debts have been honestly called in and discharged. But to thy tale, man ; yet tell it not dry. Though thou hast too much of moisture about thee to fear that already ; for the rain has not spared thy old doublet, nor sorrow thy old eyes, so that both drop tears : yet drink a cup, Cornet ; 'twill help thee to get through thy tale. You said Colchester had yielded, and that those gallant gentlemen were slain."

" Ay," replied the Cornet," they were slain ; and if it had but been in action, it would have been a pleasure to weep for them ; but one can't do so for the murdered, for somehow one's blood boils up against the murderer ; and a man is not cool enough for crying, like a woman, when he would show a better resentment of the crime. Colchester hath yielded ;

Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle became prisoners to Ireton; and in cold blood were they shot to death, by order of that Round-head captain of psalm-singing cut-throats and thieves."

"To die thus!" said Sir Hugh; "alas! it is grievous to think upon it! Noble gentlemen, they shall not die without vengeance. In faith, this tale would be as a spur to a fiery horse, to set him off in madness, did we need it to rouse our blood to action. Cornet, hast thou forgot thy old vocation? Could'st thou once more lay down thy quill as clerk to the broken-down Plymouth merchant, and take up thy pike, and once more follow to the field Sir Hugh Piper, the soldier and knight, did occasion offer to do service to King Charles?"

"Would I follow!" exclaimed old Davy; "ay, marry; I would follow such a master, and in such a cause, to the end of the world."

"Bethink you, Sir Hugh," said Sir Piers; "what I mentioned but now is, though in agitation, yet uncertain, unshaped. Prudence,

therefore, is necessary; and should this good man ——”

“ Fear him not, Sir Piers; my life for it, Cornet Davy is as true as oak; ay, and as close, too, if occasion demands it. Besides, I cannot act without his assistance. Davy is to me as necessary as a scout is to a general, or a covered way to a beleaguered fortress. For, look you, Sir Piers, did I show my head too much abroad in these matters, it would breed suspicion. One would ask, ‘ What does the old malignant in such a place, or at such a time? There is something in the wind for the King’s cause, or the old piper would not play up such a tune.’ But Davy, my invoice man, my keeper of stores and collector of monies, my servant, clerk, and friend, my very right hand, as I may say; to see *him* stir abroad excites no wonder; and he shall come and go between me and the king’s friends with no more suspicion than did Duke Hamilton, when he played at bo-peep, as Scout, or Double-face, between the King and the Scots.”

“ I am satisfied Cornet Davy may be trusted,” said Sir Piers; “ and ere the present week expires, I hope to receive such advices from many friends, some distant, some near, as may bring matter full of import for our consideration. Then we will talk further on this business: at present, the chief difficulty to be apprehended is that of obtaining in secret a sufficient supply of arms.”

“ Never despair of it,” cried Sir Hugh, “ worse difficulties than that hath wit and patience overcome; though not without the aid of money. Let me see: I can still do something in that way myself; for when my rascally troop deserted, because pay-day depended on trade winds, and it had its date with certain cargoes of rum and sugar (the landing of which never found a place in my calendar), why then Davy and I contrived to secure and conceal a certain quantity of arms, both for horse and man; and, though rusted for want of use, the scowering of a day would be all that is needed. Cornet, hast thou the item of our armoury about thee?”

“ May it please your honour,” said the Cornet, “ I pricked down the same on the back of the old muster-roll, and it is ever in my pocket in my book of sundries : here will it be found.” And fumbling within a huge pocket, that, like a well, seemed to have a far and deep bottom, the military accountant produced a fair calfskin book with silver clasps. “ Ay, here is the old muster-roll, sure enough,” said Davy, “ with the names of killed, wounded, and missing, as a closing item of the account : at the head of the latter stands one who was never found — Thomas Lighthouse, I see.”

“ ’T was a misnomer, Davy,” said Sir Hugh ; “ that fellow’s heels were ever lighter than his head ; he was the first to run away, and turn tail like a cur, at the sight of the Roundheads : but give us not the names of my old troop, but rather let us hear what we have left of their harness.”

“ Marry,” said the Cornet, “ for horse defensive armour, there is pricked down six backs and three breast-pieces, and one pot, pistol proof.”

“ I would the back-pieces had been fewer, and the breast of greater number ; seeing that your back-piece is most fitted to one of Light-head’s valour ; its chief use being for those who run away. As to the pot, it is solitary : and though it can cover but one trooper’s head, it may, if needs must, stand cook for a regiment of stomachs. I would the meat, though, were as certain as the pot ; for how, alas ! without money, shall I feed another troop ? But go on.”

“ Ten swords and five cases of pistols ; their barrels not under fourteen inches in length. Of horse furniture, one great saddle, or pad, with bars, and straps to affix the holsters.”

“ That is my own, Davy,” said Sir Hugh, “ my own furniture for old Hector, who bore me through many a hard day’s toil. He is of little use now ; wounded in the shoulder, cracked in the wind, and parcel-blind with age ; a worn-down old war-horse, fit, may be, for an old soldier. What muskets have we, Davy ?”

“ Somewhere about a dozen ; six collars of bandeliers, with store of match, some sixty

yards or so, and a sufficient complement of bullets."

"Good: what more?" said Sir Hugh.

"I have bethought me," replied the provident store-keeper, "that some of the commodities in which we traffic with the captains of the ships, may be pressed into his Majesty's service; such as the tumbrels we ship for Holland."

"They will serve us as baggage carts, though small," said Sir Hugh, "and wheel off the wounded. What more?"

"Logs, and pitch, and rope, are things often wanted in storming a town, your honour," said Davy.

"The logs and the pitch," cried Sir Hugh, as his eyes sparkled with delight, at thus hearing his own stores catalogued out for the King's service; "the pitch and the logs shall serve to smoke old Fairfax out of his close hiding at Exeter, as they smoke a fox out of his hole, if nothing else will do it, to make him come on for a tussel; and as for the rope, the Round-heads shall have it, gratis, at their hanging."

“ And store of canvass and blue lights yet remain to be entered in this present account,” continued Davy.

“ The canvass,” cried Sir Hugh, “ may help clothe the ragged royalists in doublets and shirts ; for the blue lights, Davy, they are signals of distress, and, I trust, his Majesty will not need them ; though, in faith, this seems an evening like enough to exhibit many such a candle of sorrow on the high seas ; for the wind blows and howls like a fury, and the sea roars like a wild bear. Many a mast will go by the board to night. Is thy account of arms and ammunition, in my store-house, at an end ? What more have I, that may be useful in the King’s service ? ”

“ Nothing,” replied Davy, “ but your honour’s own worthy person, and one Richard Davy, your poor clerk and servitor, who, under your favour, and the King’s commission, once wrote himself Cornet in the great current account of his Majesty’s faithful friends.”

“ Thou shalt write Captain-Lieutenant an we

once more take the field ; and that will be promotion for you, Davy," said Sir Hugh."

" I will get me some half dozen trusty followers ; and then, Sir Piers, say but the time and the place, and honest Davy once more shoulders his pike ; and I, as the brave royalist said to the rebel parliament, on quitting their house, as they jeeringly bade him go home and arm himself,— I will find me a good sword, and take good heart, and I doubt not to find a good cause in which to exercise both."

" And successfully, I trust," said Sir Piers, " if all goes well. Why, Sir Hugh, nothing seems to subdue your resolution ; you look as cheerful and speak with as much spirit now, as you did whilst you stood before the siege of Plymouth, when that compound of folly, vice, and bravery, Sir *Richard* Grenville, led you on."

" Ay," replied Sir Hugh, with a sigh, " had Sir *Richard* been but like his noble brother, Sir *Bevil* Grenville, never would the King have now been a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle. But the licence, the misrule, the violence of

that Sir Richard, and the debauched, reckless conduct of Goring, ruined the King's affairs in the West. Drunken and swaggering cavaliers were no match for the fierce, determined, independents, and the cool, sober, psalm-singing knaves of the parliament. But Sir Bevil Grenville ! he was, indeed, a leader : a nobler courage, or a gentler mind, were never wedded to make a sweeter union in the Christian or the man. Thou hast not forgot Sir Bevil, Davy, I trow ?”

“ No, your honour, nor Stratton Heights ; where Sir Hugh Piper, with Sir Ralph Hopton, Grenville, and the gallant Slanning by his side, scaled the hill, in spite of a raking fire from a couple of minion drakes, that swept off the men, whole ranks at a time, just as a sickle crops the harvest of the mower.”

“ And the Earl of Stamford and all his horse fled,” cried Sir Hugh, “ and Stratton Heights that day bore the banner of King Charles as proudly as did ever the Tower of London : and though we went to battle neither with a Bible in

one hand nor with rebellion in the other ; though we sang not God's praises through the nose, and broke his laws in the heart, yet we cavaliers forgot not to say our prayers for the victory. Stratton Heights stood for our high altars, the banner of our King for their canopy, as, with unwashed hands from the contest, bleeding, wounded, dying, or safe in life and limb, with one voice we blessed the God of battles for the victory ! Thou hast not forgot the day, Cornet ?”

“ No, nor Lansdowne fight either,” cried the Cornet ; “ but *that* victory came like the fortunes of a new gentlemen, one made rich by inheritance ; all in black for the very cause of his rejoicing, the old honour being just departed. Sir Bevil Grenville fell ; and his loss outweighed all the victory : yet was it a proud day, Sir Hugh, when you rushed up to the iron saker, that swept down your men as they ascended, and spiked it, though loaded to the mouth ; as I, with my pole-axe, felled the gunner to the earth.”

“ And then the men shouted,” said Sir Hugh, “ Lansdowne and victory !”

“ And King Charles !” exclaimed old Davy, raising his voice, as if again partaking the enthusiasm of victory.

“ And again may that glad shout be repeated,” cried St. Piers, who caught the fire of enthusiasm from his friend and old follower, “ again may that become the joyful shout of all the West. Join me, friends, — fill up to the brim ! I pledge this cup to the success of our enterprise and the deliverance of the King, whom God preserve, and set free in all happiness.”

“ And may his enemies fall, never to rise again. The very hope of our enterprise warms my old heartwith joy,” said Sir Hugh. “ I could dance, leap, and sing, at the thoughts of once more turning out for the good old cause. Thou hast not forgot, Sir Piers, that song of Alexander Brome (the poet of loyalists — the very Magnus Apollo, as I may call him, of the cavaliers), which thus goes, though a better voice than mine should troll the tune : —

“ Come, pass about the bowl to me ;
A health to our distressed king ;
Though we 're in hold, let cups go free ;
Birds in a cage may freely sing.

“ The ground doth tippie healths apace,
When storms do fall, and shall not we ?
A sorrow dares not show his face,
When we are ships, and sack 's the sea.”

“ Come, pass about the bowl to me.” Here Sir Piers and the Cornet caught the spirit of the chorus, even as they had before caught from each other the all-prevailing spirit of loyalty, so ardent in the breasts of the old cavaliers. All sorrow was for the moment forgotten in that sea of sack, the theme of song ; and they now all three joined in a full and loud chorus, that certainly made itself heard through the sundry doors and pannellings, by which they were fenced, to a very distant part of the house.

Ere the chorus was ended, and whilst those words, “ *Birds in a cage may freely sing,*” yet quavered from the lips of old Davy and Sir Hugh, a side door was softly opened, and a couple of heads, one as bright as that of a

laughing Hebe, and the other no bad representative of a companion goddess in beauty and vivacity, thrust themselves in between an opening in the hanging arras that concealed this door of the apartment. The beautiful heads thus displayed were each covered with a quantity of hair, smooth on the crown, but falling full about the neck, in a thousand small ringlets of clustering curls, straying and twining like the tendrils of the vine. A single drop pearl that hung from either ear, peeped forth amid all this redundance of tresses; a style of ornament, and of wearing the hair, that Vandyke has rendered matchless in taste and elegance by his picture of Sacharissa, Dorothy Sydney, or in that of the beautiful queen of the unfortunate Charles.

The laughing Hebe was the first of these twins in beauty who now spoke:—“What,” cried she, as she came forward, with an air of playful ease,—‘*Birds in a cage may freely sing!*’ Ay, marry, but not songs that would endanger their necks, I fancy, if the pretty foolish warblers knew how much consequence is now-a-days attached to a song. In good sooth,

gentlemen, I trust you have no eves-droppers ; else would your carol be literally fulfilled, and a dungeon in Plymouth Castle, or the town cage, would furnish one for such royal birds as you are. Nay, an singing be your sport, I see not how your burthen could go roundly with the tune, without my aid. I would sing solo for less than a cup of sack ; and not all minstrels would be thus easily satisfied, since music came begging into the halls of the great."

"What ! my pretty blossom of the mount, my heath-bell of Devon, my fair Robina," said Sir Hugh Piper, "I will give thee a better payment than a sack posset for thy melody ; I will kiss thy sweet lips, an thou wilt sing to me."

"Nay, Sir Hugh," replied Robina Edg-cumbe, — for it was the daughter of Sir Piers who now spoke, — "that may not be ; kissing, they say, goes by favour ; and here stands one who has a better right to yours than I can have, — your own dear child, Mistress Agnes Piper, to whom you have not spoken this fair day."

"In faith, pretty Mistress Robina," said Sir

Hugh, "thy words, like a Roundhead's conscience, speak true and false at the same time: true, inasmuch as I have not seen nor spoken with Agnes since I came hither; and false, inasmuch as the day is too foul to merit the fair term which but even now you gave to it. Agnes, my child, God bless thee! Kiss thy old father, Agnes, and then fill him up another cup of sack. Why, Agnes, so great is the love of thy friends here to thee, thou dost almost live at Mount Edgcumbe. I fear thou dost tarry too long, and art cumbersome."

"No, Sir Hugh," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe, "you speak two wrong things in one sentence: for you wrong our love to this young lady to fancy she could weary us, and again you injure her, by underrating the value of her company. My pretty goddaughter, Mistress Agnes Piper, I trust will ever look upon the child of her godfather, Robina, here, as a sister, and on Mount Edgcumbe as her home, whenever she chooses to make it such."

"And how dost pass thy hours and days,

Agnes?" said her fond father, as he took the cup she now handed to him, and gazed in her face with a look of the most perfect satisfaction. "Why, girl, the air of this sweet mount breathes health to thee; for the roses that used to be seen at thy breast-knot have strayed to thy cheeks, and there they glow as if full blown in June. Thou art a loving guest, I hope, to thy friends, and a kind, a useful, and obliging——"

"Mistress Agnes is all that a father could wish, Sir Hugh, I do assure you," said Sir Piers.

"But not all that your goodness merits, my kind godfather," replied Mistress Agnes, blushing; and turning to her father, she added, "we are not idle, dear sir. At morn, we are up with the lark, to hear him sit and sing on the old white-blossomed thorn in the park; and then we pluck wild flowers, and learn their names; or ramble among the paths in the cliffs, and wander down to the beach, and look at that noble sight, the ocean, as it sends its billows, foaming and breaking, to the shore. And

above all, we love to gaze on some tall ship, as she keeps on her way without effort, steady and silent in her motion, to see her gently rise and fall, in regular succession, to the solemn undulation of the waves, like one who marches to well-timed music. Oh, it is a sight to inspire the dullest fancy, to warm the coldest heart, to ——”

“ Why, how now, Agnes, girl?” said Sir Hugh: “ thou art at thy old flights, I see, talking poetry in prose as fast as thought can supply the fancy with words; thou wilt become mazed with poetry, girl.”

“ Nay, she is so already, my dear Sir Hugh,” cried Robina, the Hebe, “ Mistress Agnes Piper is all poetry; head, heart, and soul, she is compacted of nothing but bright thoughts, pure feelings, and elevated hopes. She cannot look on a rolling cloud, but she will compare it to the Alps and Apennines, that is, if it be fleecy; or to caverns and chaos, if it looks black and dismal. The sea supplies her with images of grandeur, and the stars with fancies about unknown worlds, that she will stand and

parcel out as if she had explored them. And the moon ! I must not talk of the moon, for her influences are too much akin to the bane of poetry — madness. I will rather speak of the world terrestrial, where my friend Agnes cannot look on a cock-robin, but it supplies her with matter for a sonnet. And then she has a fancy for music — in that respect she is almost as bad as myself; so that her prick-song book and her lute are almost the companions of her pillow.”

“ Is it so ? ” said Sir Hugh ; “ then, prithee, girls, sing to us instead of prattling thus fast about it, and then leave us ; for you have broken in on a most solemn hour of business between Sir Piers and myself and yonder honest fellow, who will not sit down in your presence till you bid him.”

“ Stand not for us,” said Mistress Robina ;
“ pray sit, good Master Davy, pray sit.”

“ Cornet Davy, at your ladyship’s pleasure, sweet young madam,” said Davy, as he bowed and took a seat.

“ We have all some title, and like not to

lose it," said Sir Hugh; "songstress is thine, and prithee, damsels, prove it is deserved. What wilt thou sing?"

"Anything you please," replied Robina. "I will but fetch my lute;" and away she went with the step of a bounding fawn.

"And what will you have me sing, Sir?" said Agnes; "shall it be Cowley's Hymn to Light, a poem full of exquisite thought, or something from his Davideis, or a sprightly catch of Sir John Denham's, or a stanza of Davenant's Gondibert to a melody of Rimani's? I know I must not talk of love's gentle flame to you, who think of nothing but the wars, else would I sing you Habington's sweet verses to his Castara, upon Cupid's death and burial in her cheek."

"What!" cried Sir Hugh, "can thy poets do nothing better than make the god of love bring with him thoughts of death and a churchyard? Such rhyming is not worth a rush!"

"An you like it not," said Agnes, "I have many a sweet ditty of Suckling's, or Music's Duel

by Crashaw, or his Steps to Time's Temple, or Cartwright's Lesbia's Sparrow, or ——”

“ Hold ! enough,” cried Sir Hugh, “ as old Will Shakspeare says, who is worth all your new-fangled poets in a bunch. Why, girl, thou hast given me such a volley of them, that they came about my ears like a scattering fire of infantry in a retreat. Sing something of thine own, Agnes : if I must hear poetry, I would rather hear what is thine than another's, since a father may be better pleased than a critic with such matters, and I know thy fancy. Thou wilt write verses as fast as either poet of them all.”

By this time Mistress Robina had returned with the lute : the two friends were soon seated, and the fond fathers of both, Sir Hugh and Sir Piers, forgot for awhile their plots, their politics, and almost their loyalty, in the delighted feelings called up by seeing two lovely beings, so near and dear to them, in all the gracefulness of youth, innocence, and beauty, breathing notes of sweetness to the soft concord of the melodious lute. —

THE ARTIFICE OF LOVE.*

'Tis said that Love 's a naked boy :
Rather, he 's dress'd in close disguise ;
He's boldest when he seems most coy ;
And wholly on his art relies.

As Proteus, such his subtle frame,
He's ever changing, ne'er at rest :
Sometimes like ice, and now like flame,
He spreads his influence o'er the breast.

With Friendship's confidential air
He wins your unsuspecting heart ;
Then, tangled in his wily snare,
He wounds it with his hidden dart.

With sobs of grief, and tears of woe,
He comes in Pity's sad attire :
But, ah ! those tears, that treacherous flow,
Quench not, but rouse his dreaded fire.

Then, caution'd of his arts, beware,
Beware to take him to thy breast ;
Or never canst thou hope to share
A moment's peace, a moment's rest.

* For this copy of Mistress Agnes Piper's verses, we are indebted to an antiquarian friend and poet of Devon, Edward A. Bray.

CHAP. V.

———— a piteous, fearful sight,
A noble vessel labouring with the storm.

MATURIN'S *Bertram*.

As Agnes concluded her song, she sighed, and said, "I know not how it is, but I feel this afternoon so little in harmony with my lute, that I could weep instead of sing, did I indulge the spirit of melancholy that seems disposed to creep upon me ; and yet I know not wherefore it should be so."

"Why, the dull weather affects you, may be, girl," said Sir Hugh ; "for, sooth to say, to hear the wind and sea roar so in concert together, and to look on yonder clouds, as black as midnight, that seem to be bringing up a fresh supply of thunder, lightning, hail, and rain, for the old witches who deal in storms, were enough to affect fanciful minds and weak spirits like thine. Here, girl, taste the sack in my cup, it

will dispel megrims ; it ever does so with your mother, when she has such low affections. Nay, do not turn away ; do but sip the sack. I see how it is ; you will not taste it, because you fancy it not poetical ; and no lover writes an ode on his mistress tippling Sherries sack. Yet, girl, you should remember there was a great heathen poet, as I have heard tell—one Anacreon by name, who wrote such verses on the juice of the grape, that it were enough to make a hermit a toper.”

“ Look ! ” exclaimed Robina, who stood near the window, “ only look ; if there is not master Hezekiah Hornbuckle coming up to the house all through the storm ; and the wind blows so hard that he can scarcely keep on hat or cloak : only see how he turns and stops, and turns again to battle with the gust that nearly carries him off his legs.”

“ And who is Hezekiah, my pretty sweetheart ? ” said Sir Hugh.

“ He is the new minister that I mentioned the other day to you,” said Sir Piers, replying for his daughter ; “ he is a Presbyterian puritan,

lately appointed to succeed that reverend divine of the Church of England, Master John Newte, who was turned out of his living, and has since suffered such hardships as few persons, not an eye-witness to them, would credit in the relation."

"The crop-eared hypocrite!" said Sir Hugh: "how dares he approach your house?"

"To be plain with you, Sir Hugh, he is not the worst of his class, though a puritan and a preacher. He is somewhat of an honest middleman; and on this account it is that we have him here."

"Let me tell you all about him, Sir Hugh," said Robina: "it will never be other than remembered, that when this wildfire spirit of fanaticism and rebellion was so furiously kindled by the godly in the Parliament, that, like able smiths, who heat a furnace to hammer out the red-hot iron for their purpose, they wanted hands to blow the coals to keep the fire alive; and so they called in to their aid a set of half instructed and whole mad preachers, who turned out all the sober and orthodox clergy, and

harangued the people from one end of the kingdom to the other on the danger of having popery restored, on the sinfulness of doing other than to hear or preach sedition of a Sunday, on liberty of conscience to rail against the king, on the malignancy of loyalty, on the uselessness of bishops and lawn sleeves—seeing that they could never hope to wear such themselves, on the profaneness and idolatry of railed altars, the book of sports, Maypoles, and Christmas puddings; and the utter abomination of saying one's prayers in the language of piety and Scripture, and standing up at the Gloria Patri."

"Why, my prattling Robina," said Sir Hugh, "you promised to give me a character of this Hezekiah, and instead of the individual you picture for me the species."

"Patience, and you shall hear," said Robina. "This Hezekiah was a hound whose name was Good-dog, for he would come and go at a word; and though he had a bark, yet it was not loud enough; for Cromwell, or Ireton, or Fairfax, wishing to lead astray the poor silly people of Exeter, as they called them, from

their loyalty, sent down some half dozen of these mad preachers to repeat to them all that had ever been uttered by the prophets themselves against profane and wicked kings; charging them to expound all such texts as immediately pointing at the person of Charles Stuart. Now this Hezekiah was amongst the chosen for the work; but he proving what is called an honest *middle-man*—though he can cant as well as any of them—and not being zealous enough in the kindling of his coals, was turned out of that vineyard, and sent down here to a more retired village, where it was not thought of much consequence if he did good or harm. And so ends my picture of Hezekiah: you will find it a likeness.”

“ But not a finished one, Robina,” said Agnes; “ for all the finer touches are forgotten. You are like those painters who catch nothing but the marked features and hard lines; who can paint hooked noses and long chins, but have no eye for a delicate expression, or a look, or a minute beauty, whose grace must be felt to be depicted. You have only half painted Hezekiah; and though I am no Vandyke to supply the

graces which you do not seem to feel in his character, yet I will tell you that, though a puritan, he is sincere, a rare virtue, I grant you, in these times; and though he cant, as you call it, yet has he a rich and poetic fancy, that often rises to eloquence in his discourse, if he would not, now and then, mar all by a fondness for circumlocution, and render it stiff, formal, and even ridiculous at times, by an application of the sacred language of the Scriptures to the purposes of common life. I like Hezekiah so well, that if he were but a loyalist, I should think him a wise and a good man."

Scarcely had Mistress Agnes concluded the last sentence, when the subject of her remarks appeared in the room, and presented to the little party at Mount Edgcumbe the person of a plain elderly man, in whose countenance there was a deep, rather than a stern expression, with brilliant grey eyes, whose glance could be kind as well as penetrating. Like all the puritan ministers of his time, he had his hair cut close round his head, with so many little peaks that it bordered on the ridiculous, and lessened, at

first sight, the reverence which such a countenance was well calculated to inspire. A suit of russet, the Geneva cloak of blue (the well-known garment of a disciple of Calvin), a pair of falling bands, with a little close black silk cap, formed his attire: and the figure of the wearer, as it moved with a slow and somewhat stately pace—as a religionist whose very steps, like his thoughts, should have in them a contemplative character—was not without dignity, nor altogether devoid of that easy motion which shows the gentleman even in the management of his limbs.

As Hornbuckle entered, every one saw that he must have been for some time exposed to the storm; since his steeple-crowned hat, which he wore over his scull cap, and did not offer to remove from his head, dripped like the eaves of a roof; and his cloak, “heavy with its drink,” imparted it, in no small quantities, to the polished oak floor and the carpets over which he passed.

Sir Piers and Robina exclaimed, almost in one breath, “How wet you are! What will you

have? How came you hither through such a storm?" and Agnes offered to help him off with his dripping cloak: but Hezekiah, who looked greatly agitated, waved his hand, as if he were beginning the exordium of a sermon, and refusing all assistance, exclaimed in a loud voice, like one addressing a congregation, "Out of the belly of hell will I make my cry, and thou shalt hear me! Good lack! I heard it myself, I heard the guns with my own ears, as I went down to the bottoms of the high cliffs; and the earth with her bars was about me for my security; and I looked out on the great deep, in the midst of the seas; and I saw it, and my heart waxed faint within me, and I turned away for fear, for I would not see their end."

"Good lack! Master Hezekiah," said Robina, "nor will you let us see the beginning, if you go on thus. Do leave exclaiming, and tell us what has chanced."

"And take a cup of sack," said Sir Piers, "to keep your heart warm; for you are wet to the skin, and will fall sick of a great cold."

“Talk not of cold, nor of sack, nor of such as I, who am as a nursling, or a lamb in the fold, or a garnered fowl — safe in all comfort; but think of the poor perishing wretches out yonder, and fly to their aid; and if it be God’s will there may be a saving of the fugitives from Tarshish — the sea! the sea!”

“What of the sea?” said Sir Piers.

“You shall hear,” replied Hezekiah. “I had been to a cottage close to the sea-shore, to visit a pious, reverend, and dear brother, one sick of an imposthume, and very near his glory — ungutted chickens, warm, with the feathers on, having been applied to the soles of his feet, but in vain — and I had harangued him on the remedying law, or the law of grace, which hath its own special threatenings — and the new man seemed to rejoice as the old man was going out — when, lo! whilst I was yet letting my lights burn, I heard signals of distress at sea; and by and by the sounds came again, and I went to the window, and I saw ——”

“Blue lights, I suppose,” said Cornet Davy, who was amongst the eager listeners to this

tale, " we supply the ships with them, for their cases of need in a storm. Your reverence's own lights, may be, are something of the same sort, seeing that you let them burn for souls in the last distress."

" Alas !" said Hezekiah, " I see you do not comprehend, for the darkness of your understanding: I spoke of instruction ; for the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life. But let me say my say without interruption ; for remember, friend, a man of understanding holdeth his peace. I looked out on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest, and a ship labouring and giving signals of distress, as if she would make known to the land her affliction, in this her hour of visitation. And as I looked and watched from the window, I prayed she might ride out the storm better than she expected, for she seemed to be running towards the rocks ; and her signals increased in number, even as her danger became more and more apparent. At one moment she looked as a dark spot on the waters ; at another, she was seen dashed on the

foaming tops of the waves, and again became lost to sight in the hollow of the deep seas. O ! it was a sight to make sinful man pitiful and trembling for his brother ! The clouds were dark as a garment of blackness ; the welkin like sheeted fire ; and the ocean came bounding and striving towards the shore, roaring louder than the winds.”

“ And the ship ? ” said Robina, turning pale with alarm.

“ The ship was in great distress as she laboured in the trough of the sea ; and was far off shore, struggling with the increasing tempest,” replied Hezekiah (his eye kindling and every muscle of his countenance in action as his feelings became elevated with the interest of the scene he so forcibly described), “ for the winds rose higher and higher — the winds, those restless and invisible spirits, that drive before them the swift clouds, which they curb, impel, or make to stand motionless, like the racer checked by the bridle of him who rides and rules the gallant creature.”

“ Did I not tell you he had a fine vein of

poetic feeling when he could forget his formality in his subject?" whispered Agnes to Robina; "but we must cut short this tale if any thing is to be done. Hezekiah would talk to old death as he stands at the door, and let him enter rather than give over parleying, unless you stopped him." And coming forward, she added, "What must be done? Can any help be given to the sufferers? Possibly, the vessel, like Sir Hugh Piper's Double Rose, may be drifted and wrecked on the breakers near the coast. What can be done? How long is it since you left the beach?"

"I did but look upon the ship, and came up hither as fast as my legs could carry me, to make known this case of distress to the worthy Sir Piers, whose humanity extends to the suffering on sea as well as on land."

"I fear," said Sir Piers, "little can be done: but that little we will attempt willingly. I will instantly give the necessary instructions to my people, who are ever ready for such like cases of distress; and then we will down to the shore."

“ Let me go with you,” said Sir Hugh.

“ And me !” cried the Cornet, “ I may be of use ; I have seen such perils before now.”

“ And take your cloak, my dear father,” said Agnes to Sir Hugh, who rose to prepare for his departure.

“ And take your great water-dog, old Orgar, with you, my dear sir,” said Robina to Sir Piers.

“ And ropes and torches,” said Sir Hugh, “ in one hand, and a bottle of brandy in the other.”

“ And the Bible in the other, you mean,” said Hezekiah Hornbuckle.

“ Every thing in its place, honest crop-ears,” said Sir Hugh : “ men do not preach in a tempest, to need a text from the Bible ; and if a glass of brandy, and a helping hand, can save a fellow-creature after a wreck, I hold it no bad preparation for saying one’s prayers.”

Hezekiah groaned at what he deemed a too familiar and irreverent consideration of the Bible, but made ready as eagerly as the rest to set out, in order to accompany them to

the spot whence he had witnessed the distress of the ship.

In a very few minutes Sir Piers had given all necessary directions, and returned to the watchet chamber for Sir Hugh and his companions. The two girls hung about their fathers with a thousand caresses and adieus, and many cautions as to what they were to do, and what to avoid, lest they should fall into danger themselves. Sir Piers shook off Robina, as he said, "Away with you ! I will lack no prudent caution. And do you make ready beds and warm blankets ; and look out dry clothes from my wardrobe ; and see fires lighted in the chambers, and all things comfortable and ready ; and let there be spiced possets, and all needful, both for those who go out to help, and for those, who, I trust, may be helped in this peril, on our return."

"We will do all you order ; and take care of yourselves, and God bless you, and preserve the poor mariners," were the words repeated again and again by the young ladies, as the party set out in the midst of the tempest to go

towards the shore. Hezekiah lingered last, and slipping out of a side pocket in his cloak his little clasped Bible, he said to Robina, who expressed her surprise at his loitering behind his friends — “ I will but try a lot, and straight go forward.”

She well knew what he meant ; since in her day it was a very general custom with the sectaries to “ *try lots*,” as they called it : that was, to learn the will of Providence, in respect to any important enterprize, by turning, hap hazard, to the first passage which presented itself in the Bible or the New Testament. Hezekiah did so on the present occasion, and apparently with satisfaction to himself ; for opening the book at a part where he knew tolerably well he should be certain to stumble upon something about shipwreck, in the Acts of the Apostles, his eye caught the following verse, — “ Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.”

“ That must mean,” said the learned minister, “ in this instance, the peninsula of Mount Edgcumbe, which most truly resembleth an

island : it can be no other in this lot. I will straight down to the beach ; and who knows but the wreck of bodies may turn to a saving of souls, if I am there to catch at the poor perishing sinners, and to throw them out the hope of the word, as an anchor against all peril. I will about the good work, and trust to my Master for the heavenly wages of the toil." And so saying, he caught up his staff, restored the little Bible to his cloak pocket, and set off with hasty strides after those who were gone on before him.

CHAP. VI.

Wave high your torches on each crag and cliff;
Let many lights blaze on our battlements;
Shout to them in the pauses of the storm,
And tell them there is hope! MATURIN'S *Bertram*.

THE way the party pursued from the house towards the back of Mount Edgcumbe, though then obscured by a stormy sky and the mists of a thick rain, was one, which, when seen under other circumstances, afforded scenes replete with beauty in its most varied forms. Not far distant from the mansion, after winding up the side of a hill, amidst the over-arching shadow of the woods, the wanderer in those wild haunts might enjoy a scene truly magnificent that presented itself to his view at an open space upon the summit.

Looking thence to the west, the Hamoaze appeared, with that animated character which shipping never fails to give to the river where

it is found. Beyond arose the blue and distant hills of Cornwall, extending in a line, till they might be said to become united with those of Devon by the bold eminence of Brent Tor, that stood towering above both counties, like a king who keeps in subjection the nations as they lie prostrate at his feet. In the middle distance arose the towns of Stoke, Stonehouse, and Plymouth, with its ancient castle, then in full strength and grandeur. The buildings that formed these towns were of granite and marble, such costly materials being native to the county. On a fine evening, as they stood glittering and sparkling in the sun, they presented the most brilliant appearance, characterised as they were by the uniformity of their architecture and the beauty of their situation.

Viewed from this particular spot, Plymouth Sound, with the little fortified island of St. Nicholas, or Drake's Island, was seen extended like a map, whilst beyond appeared the deep blue waters of Mill Bay, and in its immediate vicinity, to the right of the Hoe (the Hoe itself being a place so celebrated by Spenser, as to be

considered classic ground), was discerned the dismally-named port of Deadman's Bay. The eye, ranging still beyond, looked on the reach, or bold sweep of the Lara flowing at the foot of Saltram woods. By a second reach, the banks of which were studded with cottages and the little village of Oreston, the river continued its course, and disembogued itself into the Catwater, behind Mount Batten. To this scene, looking to the south, the lofty heights of Staddon formed a side-screen, whilst the view was beautifully intersected by the massive and umbrageous woods of Mount Edgcumbe in the foreground. Beyond Staddon Heights arose, surrounded by the sea, though not far distant from the land, the insulated and solitary Mewstone (probably deriving its name from the quantity of gulls or sea-mews that shelter within its hollows), a rock that looked out on the wide deep, as its waves rolled in tumult towards the shore. From the Mewstone to Penlee Point, on the opposite extremity of the scene, the eye ranged over an horizon formed by the broad and majestic expanse of the Atlantic Ocean.

Such, and many such, scenes of beauty are found in the matchless peninsula of Mount Edgcumbe.

At the time Sir Piers and his little company traversed the grounds in their way towards that part of the beach whence Hezekiah had descried the ship, a sky black, lowering, and surcharged with storm, gave a dark and awful character to the whole. As they passed on, it was melancholy to hear the wind howl through the old trees, that groaned as if in accompaniment to the horrors of the tempest; and to those sufferings which, on land as well as sea, are its frequent attendants.

Shocking as it may be, it is nevertheless true, that at the date of our narrative, and many years after, the shipwrecks on the western coast of Devon and Cornwall were called, by the lower orders residing near the shore, "*God's gifts*;" for whatever the sea sent, in its fury, towards the land, was seized, under this name, as lawful spoil; and many were the circumstances of the most inhuman barbarities committed by these desperadoes on the miser-

able sufferers who thus fell within their power; escaping the fury of a merciless element, to fall into the hands of human beings all as pitiless: and instances were recorded, when, in order to secure a spoil of value acquired by such means, many shipwrecked persons had actually been murdered by these hardened traffickers in misery and guilt.

It had been amongst the many meritorious exertions of Sir Piers Edgcumbe's life, that he had adopted every possible means on the coast within and near his own domain, not only to prevent these crimes, but to afford every possible assistance to the unfortunate who, in his day, from the want of a light-house on the Eddystone rocks, were so frequently shipwrecked either on that fatal reef or still nearer to the coast. All things necessary on such occasions were ever held in readiness, and now had been brought out by his people on the call of humanity towards the distressed.

After some time spent in toiling up the hill against the wind and storm that blew directly in their faces, the party gained the back of the

peninsula, and gradually began to descend towards the beach; passing through a little valley (in the direction of Cawsand Bay), surrounded on either side by bold and abrupt heights. A cottage stood in the bottom, about a hundred yards from the sea.* Two lofty elms, uninjured by their proximity to such a tempestuous neighbour, being so well sheltered on either side, marked the little garden of the dwelling, which stood thus embosomed in solitude and beauty. Rocks of ebon blackness skirted the shore, and the ocean rolled its majestic waves above them, bursting and breaking into sheets of foam: whilst the surrounding heights presented the wildest combinations of broken and cragged cliffs, red in colour, and here and there hung with dark pines, or with woods that grew feathering down to the very water's edge.

The party now looked with anxious eyes towards the sea; but, so thick was the haze, so

* A beautiful cottage, lately built, now stands on the same spot.

heavy the swell, that nothing of the ship could be seen.

At length Sir Piers expressed his determination to ascend a certain point which he well knew amid the cliffs; where, from its commanding height, he should in all probability discern the vessel, if she still lived or was drifting towards the more westerly point of the shore. In the mean time, as every instant grew more dark and hazy, he commanded torches to be lighted and carried along the coast, so as to make signals, that the ship might avoid those tremendous rocks on which she would inevitably be dashed to pieces if she came but near them.

Sir Piers himself then took a torch, and, accompanied by a servant, who bore another, set off for the cliffs, leaving Hezekiah and Sir Hugh busied in directing the movements of his people on the beach. With some difficulty he drove back Orgar, the famous water-dog, that seemed bent on following his master's steps.

Sir Piers, bold in heart, quick in eye, and accustomed from a boy to scale the heights and

crags of Mount Edgcumbe, before any thing like regular paths were formed to facilitate such a purpose, now ascended them, though not without considerable hazard. Several of these cliffs were also hung with tall and gloomy pines, that creaked and almost screamed as the wind assailed them on every side. Others lay torn up by the roots, shattered and overhanging some precipitous heights, as the dizzy and uncertain track wound by the side of their abyss : sometimes a cliff appeared rising above the rolling vapours or thin clouds, that seemed to float from the sea to the shore ; whilst anon the face of a giant rock, dark as the hour, would become illumined by the vivid flashes of lightning that now again began to play athwart the heavens ; showing distinctly the scathed tops of many a bald oak that had already suffered by similar shocks of the tempest.

Then followed a peal of thunder, so reverberated amid the cliffs that even the stout heart of Sir Piers was for a moment assailed by terror ; he stopped and acknowledged, by a feeling of involuntary reverence and awe, the irresistible

power of Him who “ bowed the heavens and came down, whilst darkness was under his feet.” Another peal was followed by deep silence ; for the tempest seemed to pause in its fury, as the thunder rolled away among the far-extending heights. Yet the pause was momentary, for, the storm rising again, the roar of ocean was heard contending with that of the winds, which rushed in furious gusts amid the hollows and the rocks. The red flame of the torches cast an unearthly hue on the sides of the dark cliffs, as Sir Piers now struggled forward, resolute to gain that point whence he might command the whole extent of sea beyond the mouth of the harbour, and, should the vessel yet live, hold out the signal which he had prepared for her guidance.

After incessant toil and difficulty, that no person but one perfectly well acquainted with the track could have undertaken with any probability of success, Sir Piers at length gained a bold eminence that stood out from amid the wooded cliffs.* Lower down, and at its base, lay

* A summer-house, with four seats, each looking to a point of the compass, now stands on this spot.

reefs of rock ; where, on the very verge of many a point, started up more than one aged pine that had defied alike storms and winds, though not without signs of the elemental contest, for above a century. Beyond was stretched out the main ocean ; the spray of whose billows, as they burst with fury against the shore, dashed itself nearly as high as the lofty stand on which Sir Piers was now stationed, commanding at one view the whole expanse of the sea from the Mewstone to Penlee Point, and within the range of which, on a clear day, was seen the Eddystone. Sir Piers, as he thus stood, holding fast by a pine with one hand, whilst the torch was extended in the other, distinctly perceived, drifting towards the shore, what at first appeared a dark speck on the agitated waters. As he attentively looked upon this object, he became convinced that it was a *boat* driving on to the beach, and apparently governed by no power but that of the winds and waves. The sea, to use an old phrase, ran “ mountains high ;” at one moment raising the boat on their curling tops, and at the next burying her within the

hollow of the waves, as if she would never rise again.

In this manner Sir Piers perceived her rapidly driving before the wind towards that part of the beach where he had left Sir Hugh Piper and Hezekiah. There could be no doubt she must be upset in the surf that broke with such fury on the shore : and, should such a mischance befall near the reef of rocks, not a soul within her could be saved !

No doubt the same conviction was felt by the party on the beach, for, though it was impossible they could be of the least assistance to the boat, as it came rolling onward with every wave, yet Sir Piers saw them running, by a natural impulse, towards that part of the shore where there was less hazard from the rocks than in the station they had just quitted, and where it might be truly designated as iron-bound and fatal to the mariner.

Sir Piers looked again, on turning an angle of the cliffs, and now perceived his people collected together as near as possible to the raging sea, so as to give aid, if it might be practicable, and

yet to preserve themselves from being washed away by the retiring billows. He saw a wave carry the boat within a few yards of the shore. Her fate was no longer doubtful; the only remaining hope was with God, that he would give strength to the poor wretches within her to combat the surf, and enable Sir Piers' people to rush forward with safety to their assistance. Sir Piers staid to see no more, but in all haste hurried from his lofty stand, and made his way towards the beach. In his retreat the wind, which had before been directly in his face, was now at his back, so that he returned in less than half the time he had employed in gaining the cliffs.

When Sir Piers reached the shore, the first thing he saw was his own people carrying along two bodies, which, no doubt, they had rescued from the all-devouring sea: if dead or alive he did not know. It seemed to him, even before he could join them to learn the particulars, that Orgar had borne some part in the work of deliverance; for the dog, as they carried along the foremost body, kept close beside it, wagging

his tail and looking up wistfully, as if he felt an interest in the apparently lifeless being thus transported from the shore.

The enquiries of Sir Piers were speedily satisfied; and he did not pause to enter into more minute particulars. The younger man, who it seemed had been either too feeble or too amazed to do much for himself, must have perished, but for the bold exertions of the minister, Hornbuckle, and the Cornet Davy, assisted by one of the men, who, at the hazard of their own lives, had contrived to rush forward and to throw him a rope, which he caught at the very moment when the boat was dashed forward and upset close in-shore. But even then he was too feeble to profit, as fully as might have been expected, by this assistance; and would have perished in the surf by the force of the retiring wave, had not Orgar lent his aid, and held him fast by the collar of his doublet, tugging and dragging him forward with all the energy which the noble animal was proud to display in the service of man.

The other person, though considerably older,

had in a great degree effected his own escape by extraordinary efforts at self-preservation. Like Robinson Crusoe, he had been repeatedly washed on shore and carried back again by the waves, as he combated them with the strength and address of the most able swimmer: and, like that adventurer, he had also at last been cast on shore, though not ultimately with the same good fortune. The last wave threw him with so much fury on a rock that showed its bare top above the flowing waters, that he received a blow so violent on the head and chest, as to deprive him of all sense and motion. He lay like one devoid of life upon the rock; and there he would have perished, but for the humane exertions of the men on the beach, who, at no small risk, brought him from his dangerous situation.

The younger man had fainted; probably from cold and exhaustion (for he had received no severe blows), soon after Orgar had so ably rendered his assistance in dragging him beyond the reach of the surf.

Sir Piers, without pausing, since no further

assistance could be given, for the rest of the luckless passengers had inevitably perished on the upset of the boat, now ordered his people to carry the rescued persons, as fast as they could convey such burthens, to the house, where every possible help might be afforded, without delay, that their unfortunate state required. These orders were instantly obeyed, and it was with a feeling of great delight that Sir Piers, as he quitted the beach, saw a vessel (that very vessel, the *Virginia*, which, escaping the Eddystone herself, had heard the death-cry of the crew of the *Old James*, and whose signals had first given the alarm to Hezekiah) drift before the wind into a safe anchorage in Cawsand Bay.

Sir Piers, with his friends and followers, soon reached the house; for their humanity prompted their speed; and every known means being used to restore animation, the two unfortunate persons for whose benefit they were employed rewarded their generous assistants by showing signs of life. In half an hour they were perfectly restored to animation.

The younger man appeared only weak and

feeble from his late sufferings; but the elder was in a state of so much danger from the contusions he had received on his head and chest, that it was deemed advisable to call in a surgeon. Sir Piers despatched a servant to procure such assistance, and, in the interval, both the shipwrecked persons were put to bed, with all care. But little past; for the young man was too weak to do more than thank his deliverers in a few words; and the other was too ill and too suffering to do even that.

Sir Piers saw all done that humanity required at his hands; and having seen the strangers deposited in bed for the night, he next turned his thoughts to his friends and followers: these were relieved by dry clothes and sack-possets, and soon lost all sense of their late toils in the sound sleep that was their consequence. Sir Piers had now nothing left to do but to go to bed himself; but this he could not think of till one more friend, and that, though the last, not the least, was taken care of, — Orgar the water-dog; whom, with his own hands, he that night fed with the remains of a stewed capon from his

own table; and, having patted and caressed him with many kind and encouraging words, did not chide him back, as the dog rose to follow his master in his retreat, but suffered him to sleep on the red velvet cushion of the great chair, in Sir Piers' own chamber. There both dog and master slept as sound as such worthies deserved to do, after a day spent in acts of so much humanity and exertion.

CHAP. VII.

She said, and raised her skinny hand,
As in defiance to high Heaven,
And stretch'd her long lean finger forth,
And spake aloud the words of power.

SOUTHEY'S *Thalaba*, book ii.

No one who had seen the sunset on the evening of that day whose busy events have supplied us with matter for the foregoing chapters, would have conjectured with how different an aspect that glorious luminary, at his next rising, would look upon the world. The wind had fallen during the night; the rain had ceased, and the very violence of the storm seemed to have occasioned its dispersion; even as great griefs or tempests of sorrow, if they do not kill during their progress, generally consume their own bitterness, and are far less hurtful than a slow, steady, and cankering affliction, that, "like a worm in the bud," makes little show till the

flower is withered altogether, and drops into the dust.

It was surprising, indeed, at early dawn, to witness the change that had taken place — a change such as few persons not resident in the west of England are at all accustomed to witness; where rain and sunshine, like the tears and smiles of infancy, succeed each other, often unexpectedly, and with little or no apparent cause. The fatigue, anxiety, and alarm experienced by the family and guests at Mount Edgcumbe, made all, excepting those appointed to watch the bed of the wounded stranger, sleep heavily and soundly throughout the house; so that the domestics, usually such early stirrers, were somewhat behind time, and slept what was called a good round with the clock.

One inmate, however, must be excepted; and that was the pretty mistress Agnes Piper; whose lively imagination, enthusiasm, admiration of nature, and fondness for indulging her own poetic vein in solitary rambles, made her, like every true daughter of genius, who is unsophisticated by the habits of a town life, an early

riser. On the present occasion, Agnes was more early than usual; for, not having slept so well as the rest, and thinking of all the distressing events related to her of the boat and the storm, on the previous evening, she had lain awake in bed, forming the pictures of her fancy into rhyme, and giving vent to her feelings in the Spenserian stanza.

Agnes was busied among foaming billows, and curled clouds, and crested seas, mariners and mermaids, shipwrecks and Neptune, till, like Ariel, she longed to make his dread trident shake in a powerful description of a storm of the water-god's own raising at the back of Mount Edgcumbe. Now, thinking of a storm, brought to her mind the sea; and, by a very natural train of reasoning, the sea brought to her remembrance that she was not far from it, and might as well go and observe how it looked after the tempest; and who could tell but that the muse, who now seemed a little drowsy or coy, whilst consulted by her votary on the pillow, might become more animated and propitious if wooed in sight of the broad ocean

itself. She might as well go and try; and up started Agnes with the thought, dressed herself with all speed, and without staying to disturb her companion, Mistress Robina, she determined to sally out, with the purpose of visiting the very spot where she had heard the poor man was so knocked about by the rocks, and rescued, on the previous night.

Agnes was subject to such flights, such fits and starts of an ungoverned fancy; for she had been from her infancy an indulged — and, but for the natural sweetness of her temper, would inevitably have become a spoilt—child, in the fullest sense of the word. As it was, she was headstrong, did things by impulse, and seldom consulted advice till she had made up her mind. Yet, with all these faults, for we like her too well to under-rate her, it must be acknowledged she had many excellent qualities — a warm heart, the most unwearied good-nature, high principles, and, as the sheet-anchor of all her perfections, a deep, sincere, and practical reverence for the word of God.

Her very faults arose from the exuberance of

her good qualities, faults that were those of neglect, since, like weeds that spring up from a rich soil, for want of rooting out, they had gained strength and growth. Thus, her ardent feelings, amiable in themselves, yet not having been checked or regulated by early discipline and control, often led her into the commission of great follies, not to say errors; and, like all imaginative minds when untempered with judgment, she shaped her conduct by her own wild fancies and strong feelings, instead of submitting it to those becoming and useful forms of order and reserve, which are as barriers to virtue, set up to prevent the intrusion of what is wrong within the precincts of those decorums that should surround her on every side. Agnes seldom took a whim into her head but she gratified it, without pausing for reflection; and as these thoughtless acts were reproved but with a good-humoured expostulation, generally ending with a kiss, which her poor father called *scolding her*, she was as daring in her freaks as any petted squirrel that escapes its cage.

Agnes arose, as we have said, with the lark.

In the east, through a thin veil of clouds, broke the early dawn, which the young enthusiast contemplated with delight, as she softly opened her casement, and looked abroad to hail the opening day. There she remained for some time ; listened, and no longer heard the hooting of the owls that often made themselves audible from amid the old oaks and elms near the house at Mount Edgcumbe. But in its stead the shrill crow of chanticleer came upon her ear, like the cry of a sentinel on his post, to proclaim the approach of day. Gradually broke the light, now faint and uncertain, trembling on the distant heights, till they appeared to glow bright as gold ; whilst the vallies and deep hollows of the surrounding scene were still wrapped in dun obscurity, or shrouded in misty wreaths like scudding clouds.

Agnes sallied forth, and commenced her ramble amid the varied beauties of Mount Edgcumbe ; now pausing to contemplate them with delight, and again renewing slowly her walk, as images of poetry, derived from nature, suggested themselves to her mind ; and not the most

minute object escaped her observant eye. She looked with rapture on all around her, as the cheerful beams of the morning sun darted over hill and dale, touched the woods, gilded tower, and town, or sparkled on the gurgling stream, as it strayed trickling down the side of some bank that was seen tangled with weeds and creeping plants. All nature seemed to gain renewed life and animation, as that world, so lately silenced and obscured by the dull and drowsy night, started into the consciousness of action and of joy.

A thousand birds sprang from their covert, and warbled in the wildest melody their notes of welcome to the early day. Some soared on their little wings to mount the free blue sky, or to wheel among the clouds; whilst others sat chirping and pruning their plumage on the boughs of a sweet-scented thorn, or an antique elm; and the fall of many a little rivulet and stream murmured musically in concert to the feathered tribes of air, whilst every delicate herb or flower amid the grass sparkled with

dew, as if some fairy spirit of the hour had hung sportively a jewel on each opening bell.

All these circumstances of nature highly charmed Agnes in her morning walk; she rambled down to the sea beach, looked with a fearful interest on that dread ocean, which, though the storm was past, had not yet settled itself into tranquillity, but still rolled its multitudinous billows with a heavy swell towards the shore. She saw and felt its grandeur; yet somehow or other the muse did not come: disappointed, therefore, for the present, she gave over the attempt to finish her verses, and thought that, as she returned to the house, she would pass by a favourite spot which was, on more accounts than one, somewhat noted at the date of our narrative. Thither Agnes bent her steps; and thither must we bear her company.

The spot she so much admired was one, indeed, replete with beauty. Within a little lonely dell there stood a cottage, thatched, and covered with many a wild rose, honeysuckle, and creeping plant, that grew so thickly as to

encroach even upon the latticed windows, and somewhat to obscure their light. It stood sheltered from the rude breath of the wind, or the too ardent gaze of the sun, by some venerable and spreading oaks growing close to the house and within the little garden, that was surrounded in part by a quickset hedge; where, in due season, there appeared a gay display of roses, pæonies, pinks, and gilliflowers.

Apart from the cottage, yet being also sheltered by high trees, with a thicket behind them, was found that which gave celebrity to the spot, THE HOLY WELL. It was a clear still pool, whose source was in the earth, whence it sprang; and finding its way through a narrow outlet at some little distance from the dark silent well, it assumed another character, and trickled down the side of a bank, losing itself in the valley that was ever verdant from its refreshing streams.

By those acquainted with the superstitions of the West, it will be remembered, that the Pixy race, having their origin with the fairies of the Saxon times, are still held as the guardians of all wells and fountains, whose wondrous powers,

we have been informed, are to this day held infallible by the peasantry, in some parts of Devon and Cornwall. At the date of our narrative, the practice also of witchcraft — even *now* holding sway in the West — was likewise credited, not merely by the vulgar, but by the educated, the talented, and, above all, by the godly; who, as Butler has not forgotten to record, made such a stir to root out old witches.

At that time seldom was there a holy or wonder-working well seen, but what was found to be under the immediate superintendence of one of these priestesses of Beelzebub, who were resorted to, by all persons desiring information, as to an interpretest of the oracular powers of the well. To be brief, many a shrewd and cunning old woman made such an office the means by which, in a great degree, she gained support; and as the credulous and superstitious love not to lose the power of gratifying their favourite propensities, these old creatures, who sometimes did them the kindness to terrify them out of their lives in return for their

money, were always winked at, and seldom informed against, notwithstanding the desire of the Parliament

“ To find revolted witches out.”

The holy well within the precincts of Mount Edgcumbe could boast such a priestess; and though we cannot say Dame Gee (for such was her name) was a favourite with Sir Piers, yet her having, some thirty years before, lived as a waiting-maid with his grandmother, her being an excellent village doctress, both for man and beast, having shrewd sense, apt and forcible expressions in her discourse, and a good deal of cunning (so that she put the best face on things before Sir Piers), altogether procured from him the indulgence of living within the beautiful little cottage we have described; certainly no suitable habitation for “ a hag with age grown double,” such as every witch ought to be, to accord with the character of her profession. Another circumstance, also, may help to account for this indulgence towards her on the part of Sir Piers: she had assuredly

once cured him of a most dangerous inflammation of the eyes, by a preparation of herbs, to whose merits alone, he, like a man of sense, ascribed the cure; though the country people insisted it arose from the charm pronounced over the decoction.

As Agnes approached the holy well, she paused a moment to look upon Dame Gee, who now stood bending over it like an ancient sibyl, with her thin gray locks straying from under a coif covered by a high-crowned hat, such as would have suited Mother Shipton, that queen of witches, who is said to have attracted the notice of so many wise fools in the reign of King Henry VIII. Dame Gee was a person not to be held in contempt, if but half the things reported of her were founded in truth. The following sketch of one incident of her life, still the theme of *tradition*, we give as it has been handed down to posterity by those elders who love to tell such tales over a Christmas fire, in our good town of Tavistock.

Dame Gee had an only son, who was a fair and promising youth, being in all things very

unlike Caliban, the offspring of the hag Sy-corax. This boy quarrelled with one of his companions, a lad about his own age, whose mother interfered; and thinking Dame Gee's darling teased her own, she struck him a blow, and sent him crying home. The witch, enraged by this blow bestowed on *her* son, determined on a bitter revenge; and having consulted the dark power of evil, she is said to have drawn a *circle*, near the cottage of her offending neighbour, with such potent and such hellish arts, that on any person stepping within it, he would instantly become an idiot, full of spite and mischief.

Dame Gee so contrived the accomplishment of her charmed circle, that it might be ready to entrap her hated neighbour's child as he returned home from school. But who shall speak the fury and the punishment of the witch, when, by some unforeseen casualty, the first person who stepped within the accursed ring was *her own son*! From that hour he became almost less than human; a thing of "mops and mows;" ugly in body, miserable in mind,

and terrible to all about him : but to none so shocking as to his incensed mother, to whom the very sight of the boy became as gall to bitterness. From that time forward Dame Gee is said to have become the most cruel, unrelenting, yet cunning of her tribe, doing evil by means less open, yet more deadly in their secret effects. So went the tale ; it was generally believed at the time, nor is it to this day wholly discredited even by posterity, as they turn pale at the relation of a deed so full of horror.

Agnes had heard this story ; and to one of her turn of mind, though full of terror, there was something of a deep dread interest attached to the character of Dame Gee, that excited her imagination. She had seen the idiot boy, yet she doubted if she ought to believe, or disbelieve, the story of his mother's cruelty having reduced him to such a pass ; since in her village kindness amongst the poor, Agnes had often heard of the excellent nursing, and the wonderful cures performed by this woman, in cases where the doctors had wholly

failed; and she also knew that even Sir Piers himself had no objection to wink at her being called in to try what she could do when the more regular practitioners were at fault. The well, too, and the old woman's powers in expounding its fearful signs, were things remembered, and, if not wholly credited, were at least not positively rejected, and always spoken of with awe by the lively and enthusiastic Agnes.

As she now, therefore, saw the ancient sibyl bending over the dread pool, she felt like one who fears, yet who expects, and almost hopes, to have an excited imagination gratified by some supernatural sign or wonder, yet without exactly knowing what to expect or what to desire might appear. She advanced, however, towards the holy well; and as the old woman looked upon her young visitant drawing near, Agnes had a full view of her dark and ill-omened countenance, whose expression was at once indicative of sense and cunning; and, even in its most composed state, had a quick or haughty glance at command, with a supercilious

air, that seemed to declare to every one with whom she spoke how much she was their superior in the proud possession of natural intellectual powers.

“ Good day, Dame,” said Agnes; “ you are busy at the well, I see, this morning: have any of the villagers been to consult you, or to learn who stole a horn spoon?” She added, endeavouring to talk cheerfully to the old woman, and as if she was not afraid of her, “ These, and a thousand more wonders, people say you can determine by the bubbles the water makes in answer to your questions.”

“ You would seem to doubt, young lady,” said Dame Gee, “ the truth of these things; but your belief in the powers of the well is too firm to be shaken by doubts, though your priest should start them. For once, however, you are mistaken; no villager has made token by the holy well this morning. I came, as you see, to dip this pitcher of water for a special purpose: at cock-crow this day, the surly old groom, Ralph, brought me a message from the housekeeper at Mount Edgcumbe.”

“ Indeed !” said Agnes ; “ I left Mount Edgumbe to take an early walk down to the beach, to see how the ocean looked after the storm ; and, as I thought, I left my chamber before the housekeeper was stirring.”

“ She has not been in bed all night, so Ralph said,” replied Dame Gee ; “ for one of the men, whom, it seems, Sir Piers saved from death on the sea, is like enough to find it on land. He is dangerously hurt, and I am sent for privately, by the old housekeeper, to come up, and try a charm upon him this morning.”

“ Nay, now, good dame, try something better than that,” said Agnes ; “ I should have more faith in one of your herb plasters for a hurt, or a mess of featherfew and orguns drink to compose him to sleep.”

The witch answered the first part of this bold speech with a scowl not at all pleasant to Agnes, who feared she might have said too much.

“ What ! Lady,” exclaimed Dame Gee, “ do you scoff at my art ? whilst, at the very moment

you do so, you are burning with curiosity to call it into action for your own service? I know where *your* thoughts are; and that you would learn tidings of the absent. Wherefore not say so at once, when there is none to hear you, but her who *could* satisfy your desires? Away with this! there needs no masking with me. Do not I know, that whilst you lived for two years with your grandam at Exeter, there were fine doings unknown to your father?"

Agnes was perfectly confounded: she had not a word to answer; for she was conscience struck, though from such a quarter. She turned pale, but could not command presence of mind enough to know what to say.

Dame Gee saw her confusion. "Come," she said, "young lady, I will spare you pain: I will do your bidding without waiting your commands. Do you stand there, and be silent; and when I wave this ashen bough thrice" (she took up a short staff, or wand, that lay beside the pitcher she had been filling), "ay, thrice over the well, the spirit of the spring shall make known his answer. Look on this dark pool!

It is black, yet clear as the chamber mirror that reflects thy beauty. Look into it !”

Agnes did so, and saw with surprise how well it would have served her as a glass, did she need it, to bind up her flowing locks.

“ It is a deep and fearful pool,” said Dame Gee; “ for truth lies within it; and makes known the hidden secrets of things to those who desire to lift the veil. Mark me, maiden. If the man or woman enquired after by me, as I stand thus and make sign, be well, the water will instantly bubble up; if sick, it changes colour fast as an evening cloud; but if dead! there comes no change. Dost thou mark me?”

“ I do,” said Agnes, as her heart beat quick, and in spite of herself she became nearly overpowered by the terrors in part excited by the demeanour of the witch, and in part by the vivacity of her own imagination.

“ Place a silver tester, if thou hast one, on yonder dark stone by the water’s brink,” said the hag; “ it is the token to the spirit: it must be silver.”

Agnes, trembling, obeyed.

“ Now stand up, and fear not,” continued Dame Gee: “ thou art not the first maiden whom I have seen look like the sheeted dead, as she has paused on the brink of this holy well. Not long since, there came to me one who was a wife; who would know if her husband, then in durance to the Parliament, for he was a sequestered churchman, might be alive or dead. I saw her eager eye, her breathless anxiety, as I called his name. The water made no change; but when I looked on *her* again, she was changed, and fearfully. Black confusion was in her mind; anguish and the bitter passion of speechless woe. She went home, when straight came the tidings that her husband had been murdered! The widow lives; but so lives that not an hour passes, but she thinks death comes but slow to her, though he came so fast to him she still most laments. Now shall the pool speak of thy fortunes and thy friend.”

“ I will not look on it,” exclaimed Agnes, in a tone of horror; “ I dare not.”

“ Nay, you must not flinch,” said the hag, who seemed to delight in the terrors she had

excited in the mind of the young lady. “ You *shall* look on it ;” and seizing Agnes by the arm, she said, as she held her fast, “ Be silent ; speak not till I have made the sign ! Now tell me, spirit of the waters, and tell me true, if Reginald Elford yet lives or not : —

In health or in wealth,
In weal or in woe,
If dead or alive, tell me so !

Thrice the hag waved her wand ; and looking herself upon the well, at the moment she made the terrified Agnes do so likewise, she uttered an exclamation of surprise. Agnes screamed ; and Dame Gee was astonished at her own work, like one of those wizards who may be supposed to feel surprised by the actual appearance of the devil, whilst only pretending to raise him up ; for what could equal her astonishment, or the affright of Agnes, when they beheld a human head, wearing a large slouched hat, reflected distinctly in the dark pool ; the appearance being immediately followed by a young man catching Agnes in his arms as, from terror, she was falling to the earth.

CHAP. VIII.

Farewell ! God knows when we shall meet again ;
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ GRACIOUS Heaven ! whence come you ? ”
enquired Agnes.

“ From the thicket hard by. I saw you as I
was advancing under cover of the trees ; I heard
my name called, and suddenly coming forward,
I —— ”

Agnes scarcely heard him, and she looked as
if about to lose all consciousness of his presence,
or of her late alarm. He held her up ; as
Dame Gee, who seemed to enjoy the scene of
terror her own devilry had helped to bring
about, lifted up the pitcher and threw some
water in the young lady’s face. The sudden
chill prevented her fainting away ; but she
trembled so she could no longer stand ; and the

intruder helped her to a large stone that formed a natural seat near the holy well. He then seated himself beside her, and paid her all those little soothing attentions that he thought might restore her spirits and dispel her agitation; as Dame Gee officiously chafed her temples, and her hands, that were cold as death. And though it was most likely that, at such a moment, nothing was so much desired as *her* absence, yet, nevertheless, under pretext of giving aid to Agnes, lest she should faint away again, she seemed resolved to stay where she was, for no other real purpose than that of tormenting.

Agnes spoke only a few broken, agitated sentences; but the young man, who was well looking, and though poorly dressed had that appearance which ever distinguishes a gentleman, even if clothed in rags, observed great caution in what he spoke, and seemed vexed that in the surprise and alarm of the moment, he had acknowledged his name to be Elford before Dame Gee, by so suddenly appearing from the thicket (where he had been lurking for some time) in answer to it. He now made an

attempt to shift the subject, whilst he addressed some words of soothing courtesy to Agnes ; but more in the manner of a stranger than in that of a familiar friend. Suddenly, however, he stopped, hesitated, was confused, and seemed to know not what to say next.

The acute observation of Dame Gee would have detected a much better attempt to deceive her than this, so slovenly executed ; and as she possessed an uncommon boldness of character, seldom found in one so artful — for cunning and timidity generally go together — she now looked him full in the face, and said, “ Do you think, young Sir, to deceive me ? or that I, who was born on the very estate so lately lost by your father, do not know an Elford ? I know the family features as well as I know my own face. Let me see but one of their kindred in the most distant corner of the globe ; and their air of pride, their haughty, unbending brow, their eye that, in the soberest of them all, has in it a glance of the family madness (so fatal to more than one of their house), could not be mistaken. I could tell an

Elford, even if I looked upon him as he lay coffined in the earth, by the very form and size of his bones."

"If you know so well who I am, good dame," said the young man, "you cannot be ignorant that I have no desire to make my name so public, as you would seem to think, by thus loudly repeating it. Take this, and be silent."

He offered Dame Gee a piece of silver, which she did not refuse; but, looking on it a moment, she said, "You are the first of your name, I will warrant, that ever gave less than gold to reward a faithful friend or a silent tongue; but I will keep peace with mine."

The young gentleman seemed to feel this reproach on his liberality; for he blushed as he said, "These times have been fatal to our house, and they have brought down our wealth."

"But not your pride," said Dame Gee, sharply. "Hark ye! Master Elford, I will deal fairly by you, and tell you I know more of your affairs than you may think I do. I tell you this to show you I *can* be trusted, notwith-

standing the bad name some people give me. Take my advice, and do not linger here about Mount Edgcumbe ; for though you are a royalist, that circumstance would not alone make Sir Hugh Piper allow you to talk in private to his daughter, under the greenwood tree, with whole bones in your skin."

Agnes, on hearing this, looked greatly distressed, and young Elford seemed vexed beyond measure at the rude, impertinent freedom of the old woman ; yet she appeared to know so much more than he could wish about his affairs, that he feared to provoke her by showing his resentment. He bit his lip with vexation, and, smothering his anger as well as he could, civilly desired her to be gone.

" I will be gone," she said ; " and though I go straight to Mount Edgcumbe House, to visit a sick man there, yet will I say nothing about Mistress Agnes and the shadow in the well ; for shadows, you know, ought not to affright a steady mind. I will but say one word and be gone ; and that word is of advice to you, Mistress Agnes. In the face of this young gen-

tleman, I would counsel you not to listen to him, for he is an Elford. His father, Sir Marmaduke, despised *your* alliance at a time when your own father was the richest merchant of the West. All the country rang with it; and every body knew that Sir Piers Edgcumbe interfered to make up the match, if it might be, out of regard to his old friend Sir Hugh. But that failed; and I was at the Mount when he offered to go himself and bring you away from Exeter, where your granddam had suffered Master Elford to woo you, unknown to both fathers, till Sir Marmaduke found it out and raved about it. Think you, therefore, if Sir Marmaduke would not bow his pride to receive you when you were a rich merchant's daughter, that he would now bend it when your father is so reduced as to become the keeper of a common store? Away! and learn wisdom before it is too late."

"Woman!" exclaimed young Elford in an angry voice, "this freedom surpasses all bounds. You have distressed the young lady — I desire you to leave us. Go, I beseech you, go; ob-

serve prudence, and I will find a way to reward you."

"Find first the means," said Dame Gee; "for yours are now at a low ebb, if report speaks truth. And for you, Mistress Agnes, let the times go as they will, can you so humble your spirit as to steal into a family, or be received into it by sufferance — certain you will be looked upon with contempt, as an interloper, an intruder — one who is beneath the honour she shares? Would you be held as the branch that grafts itself on a great stock only to disgrace it? To meet cold looks, pointing fingers, and wagging heads, as you sit alone, shunned by all; or to see the backs of your new relatives turned towards you instead of their faces? I wish you joy of such a marriage, if yonder young gentleman becomes your bridegroom." And so saying, the hag (who had only given this advice for the sake of showing she possessed the importance of being perfectly well acquainted with what they hoped had been more secret) took up her staff, and suddenly retreated from the well, leaving Agnes seated on

the stone, weeping bitterly, with Reginald Elford by her side. As he held her hand, and looked upon her with a countenance, in which resentment for the insolence of Dame Gee was mingled with tenderness towards herself, "Agnes," he said, "dear Agnes, be comforted. This distress embitters the few moments chance has given me to see you. Do not add to my suffering the sight of your distress !"

"Leave me," replied Agnes, "Reginald, I beseech you, leave me. That wicked woman spoke truth, though in bitter words. Besides which, my father urged me——"

"Not to forget me, not for ever to cast me off," said Reginald Elford, "Sir Hugh, the kindest of men, the best of fathers, could not do this violence to a daughter's feelings, however little he might regard mine."

"Not with the intent to injure either of us, believe me," said Agnes: "but, oh ! Elford, you do not know my father. There lives not, it is true, a kinder heart, or a more generous mind ; yet has he one quality even stronger

than these — he is the most honest of men ; and to sanction your affection for me contrary to the will of Sir Marmaduke Elford, he would deem an act of such dishonesty, that on no consideration would he be brought to listen to it. He never will sanction your affection till it is confirmed by your father's approval of your choice."

" Alas ! Agnes," said young Elford, " do not speak of *my* father : he is in no condition to be asked for such consent ; and I am in none to seek you as a wife. No, Agnes," he continued, as he started up and paced up and down by the side of the well, " I cannot, I must not, I ought not, to seek your hand — we are beggared — all, all is lost — a price set on my dear father's head ! Whilst he has no place in which to hide it, saving by the mercy, the charity, or the danger of some friend, who may, at his own peril, venture to give him shelter — whilst, with agony unutterable I speak it, his many hardships, his disgraces, his long-suffering and sorrows, have awakened in him some touch of that dreadful malady to which the hag but now

alluded. He has escaped the care of his son, who now seeks him sorrowing, yet uncertain where to find him. It is said he is somewhere concealed in this neighbourhood — to seek him is my principal motive for being here ; yet not the only one. There is a matter of deep import — but I will not speak of it. Rather let me hail these moments that are given to you ; yet I confess, Agnes, it was not to seek you that brought me this morning to Mount Edgumbe.”

“ What brought you then ? ” said Agnes.

“ Do not ask,” replied Reginald : “ if it concerned myself alone, be assured you should know it ; but a life of more worth than a thousand such as mine, an interest vital in itself, and sacred to my best feelings, puts a seal upon my lips even to you. Rest satisfied that nothing which Reginald Elford calls his, but you may command it. His honour is not his alone — since it belongs to his father, to his country, a thing never to be betrayed or lost but with life — honour keeps me silent, Agnes ; ask me nothing.”

“ I will ask nothing,” replied Agnes ; “ yet I would you could see my father. You look so distressed, so ill ; it breaks my heart to see you. You have never met my father, for he never came to Exeter whilst I lived under the roof of old Lady Parr. I would you could see him.”

“ I must not now, Agnes,” replied Elford ; “ for he, as your father, would have a right to question me concerning mine — and I could not answer him ; I could not, Agnes,” he added, in a voice that expressed the bitterest feelings, “ I could not find courage to tell him that after having won his daughter’s affections without his leave, I fear I must resign her for ever.”

“ Oh ! say not so,” cried Agnes, as the tears she took no pains to hide fast trickled down the cheeks of the affectionate girl. “ Do not go from me ; time is always passing on, and things may change. You are, you say, ruined in fortune, and your father also : surely that circumstance will conquer his pride and his objections ; and if our fortune improve in the

world, we may do you service. My father never saw you, but he knows your character, and honours it, and never had any objection to our engagement, but what he thought honour demanded; that he should not sanction it till Sir Marmaduke, more nobly born than himself, and of higher degree, should first give his consent. Stay, and see what time may do for us."

"For me, Agnes, I fear it can do nothing. I have lost all in these wars but my honour, and my life. I could not be the villain, even if my father were sufficiently himself to yield his consent to my wishes, to make you, tenderly nurtured and bred, the sharer of my misery — poor, exiled, my life held forfeited by those who now cut off whomsoever they proscribe as obnoxious to their measures. Thus circumstanced, what a lot should I have to offer to the woman I most love! No, Agnes; once let me but rescue my father, let me but see him in safety, and the beggared Elford, with nothing left but his sword and a broken heart, must seek some employ in a foreign land. No

matter how brief may be his date of life, when he has lived to see his dearest hopes die before him."

"Do not talk so," said Agnes, all her enthusiasm returning at the sight of his distress. "Do not think so meanly of me. I gave you the most solemn pledge of faith and truth, when you were far above me in fortune; and do you think I would now desert you, now when you are poorer than myself? No! Elford, I will not recall my vow, though circumstances may for ever forbid its fulfilment. Whilst I live, it is for you, and for my father."

"The very gentleness, the very affection that would brave all evils for my sake," said Elford, "ought to teach me not to take advantage of it, not to betray it. Oh! Agnes, had I but a hope left to give you comfort, you know not with how much joy I could embrace it, as renewed life is hailed by the sick man ready to yield his breath. But there is a cause, a fatal cause: I must not injure you so much as to — I will not risk your safety. I speak darkly, I know I do; yet I must not

speak more plainly. I am care-worn and broken-hearted, and quite unfit to name as gently as I would do a subject so painful to a being, kind, good, and tender like yourself. — Agnes, forget me ; forget one whose path leads to anxious toils, to danger, perhaps to death : and no matter how soon it comes when he shall have spoken to thee that last bitter word — farewell !”

Agnes could no longer suppress her feelings ; her imagination pictured to her a thousand terrors, a thousand fearful circumstances, suggested by those dark hints Elford had so mysteriously thrown out : and, unaccustomed as she was to control any strong impulse of her mind, she cried aloud, in the bitterness of her heart, “ Danger or death, I care not ; both would be welcome, so we may not for ever part — and to part thus !”

Her tears continued to flow, as Reginald Elford endeavoured to calm and soothe her feelings ; till softened by those unaffected expressions of her constancy and affection, the high spirit of honour which had dictated to his

mind that he ought to leave her free, and even resign her for ever, rather than involve her in those perils with which he was surrounded, was fearfully shaken ; and after having in vain attempted to recall his expiring purpose, he ended by receiving and giving, with fond delight, every renewed token and promise of affection ; referring all the rest to time and chance, those two most uncertain of all friends, to whom lovers in extremity are apt to trust, as drowning men catch at straws for safety.

Time flew on, the sun rose higher and higher, and the morning was advanced before Agnes remembered how long she had been seated by the side of the holy well ; nor is it likely the discourse would even then have terminated, had not her ear been suddenly assailed by hearing her name called aloud in the neighbouring wood. Agnes started up. “ I am called,” she exclaimed, “ my father has sent some one out to seek me. Adieu ! Reginald — be prudent, be happy, avoid all unnecessary danger ; and remember, though our affections are plighted, our hands never must

be joined till Sir Marmaduke Elford and my dear father sanction our choice. Adieu ! Adieu !”

And with this last feeble attempt to preserve unbroken the obedience due to her parent, Agnes set off to join those who were sent to seek her. She left Elford distressed by many complicated causes of anxiety, the most urgent of which he had not mentioned to her, from a sense of honour, which forbade him to reveal, even to the woman he most loved, a confidence the most sacred that had ever been committed to his keeping.

CHAP. IX.

———— appearances deceive ;

And this one maxim is a standing rule,
Men are not what they seem.

HAVARD's *Scanderbeg*.

It appeared as if this morning had been predestined to be full of trials and emotions to poor Agnes ; for another, and scarcely a less agitating scene, awaited her on her return to the house. On entering the parlour where the family partook of their morning meal, the signs of universal disturbance and anxiety were apparent ; and her father, Sir Hugh, contrary to his usual manner, even when she had most offended, spoke to her snappishly, on the subject of her early rambles and long stay in the grounds. It was evident something had occurred to disturb the equanimity of the whole party.

Near the breakfast table sat Sir Piers Edgumbe ; a packet of papers was before him ; an

open letter in his hand, which he read again and again, refolded, and at length placed it carefully in his pocket, observing the most profound silence, whilst every line of his intelligent countenance expressed a thoughtful, almost a solemn, mood; and there was, every now and then, a little irritability of manner about him, that showed itself notwithstanding the efforts he made to conceal his vexation; for on tasting the eggs and muscadine set before him, in order to finish his repast, he pshawed and pished in a way Agnes had never before observed in a man of his equal temper, and not usually moved to pettishness by any such trifle as a breakfast not exactly suiting his relish. And what was more remarkable, he suffered poor Orgar to sit with his two fore-legs erect, looking him steadfastly in the face, and every now and then giving an impatient whine to attract attention, without the least regard being paid to these intimations of wished-for kindness on the part of an old and faithful servant; till, by reiterated complaints, Orgar obtained, though carelessly given, a slice from the chine

of beef that stood in the middle of the board, as the solid foundation of the meal.

Sir Hugh Piper paced up and down the room, his right hand in the pocket of his hose, and holding in the other that long tube, in whose fumes, and the exercise of inhaling and exhaling them, he found a certain resource on all occasions of emotion ; for if overjoyed, he took a pipe to sober his raptures ; if held in suspense, or doubt, he was wont to say it passed away the hours till he knew the worst, or the best, of what was coming ; and if vexed or disappointed, he held there was no philosophy like that of smoking Barbadoes tobacco. Sir Hugh Piper certainly looked serious, even after his daughter had entered the room, and the little scolding was over ; and Cornet Davy, whose manners, emotions, and countenance were ever in exact conformity with those of his master, sat in the chimney-corner, looking grave for company, and seeking no other consolation than that of tempering his breakfast, which he was eating with much deliberation, by sipping in a very modest way, from time to time, a cup of

strong waters of most excellent quality and flavour.

Agnes felt very uncomfortable ; she was conscious that her morning ramble was not quite one of which she was anxious to give an account, unless, indeed, her father questioned her in private. Should he do so, she satisfied her conscience (that told her she ought to communicate all unasked) with the resolution to speak the whole truth, and nothing else, using neither shift nor excuse to palliate her offence. She sat down in silence ; and in order to be busied in doing something, to relieve herself from that painful sensation of sitting still, and fearing to meet the eye of others (a fear which most young people experience when they have been engaged in what they feel to be wrong, and dread to have known), she helped herself to some of the good things that were upon the table, though she had no relish for them, as it may well be supposed, her recent distress of mind having prevented the beneficial effect which the morning air would otherwise have produced on her appetite.

Friends, when suffering under painful circumstances that they do not communicate to each other, always feel silence to be a most awkward and embarrassing thing; and so was it at this moment: every body, perhaps, longed for relief, yet no one had the courage to break this portentous silence; till, on the door opening, Mistress Robina Edgcumbe appeared. In a moment her quick eye and shrewd glance perceived the unusual gloom that reigned around; and looking on her friends with surprise, she said, "Why, what ails you all? what has happened? No new calamity, I hope; you all look as solemn and are as dumb as a set of quakers, or as some tinkering preacher, who fancies himself under inspiration, before the opening of a sermon. Nay, my dearest father, my dear Sir Hugh, do let me see one of you smile, if it were only out of opposition to the puritans, who think godliness must be graced by sour looks."

"We have no cause to smile this morning, my dear Robina," said Sir Piers. "I have received letters from some friends, respecting an

affair we have at heart, that have something vexed me. Besides which, we have, I fear, a dying man in the house."

"And a living one," said Sir Hugh, who stopped short in his walk up and down the room, and intermitted the exercise of his pipe; "and a living one, who, I think, from a word or two that has been dropped, would be much better out of it."

"Hush!" said Sir Piers; "he is up; I have sent to bid him to breakfast; and, I think, I hear him coming."

It was even so; for the door again opened, and a young man entered the room. The clothes he wore did not fit him, for they belonged to Sir Piers; they did not, therefore, show his person to advantage; nevertheless, it was apparent that he was well formed, and of superior height. The features of his face were handsome, though an air of deep thoughtfulness, almost of melancholy, added, in appearance, four or five years at least to his age. His complexion, naturally fair, looked wan and

sickly ; and it was evident, that he still felt feeble and suffering from the hardships he had experienced on the previous night. In his countenance there was none of the animation of youth, none of that buoyancy of spirit which creates hopes out of desires, and expectations as soon as these are formed. Yet in his dark eye, full and lucid, there was what, indeed, is seldom seen in dark eyes, a character of peculiar sweetness that more than counterbalanced the want of the usual vivacity found in those, who, like himself, were young and handsome.

As this gentleman entered the room, Sir Piers rose and saluted him : he bowed in return, and looking round to notice in a respectful manner the rest of the company, his eye caught a view of Mistress Agnes Piper : no sooner had he seen her, than his pallid cheek became still more so, whilst hers, on the contrary, was dyed of the deepest crimson. A slight bow, and a confused expression of recognition, passed between them ; as Sir Hugh, who observed it, said, in his abrupt manner, to his daughter, “ It should seem, Agnes, that you know this young gentle-

man; but there needs not to blush about it, I trow."

Mistress Agnes said, she had frequently seen the young gentleman whilst she resided with Lady Parr, her maternal grandmother, at Exeter; "indeed, he often visited at her house."

"Thou hadst many acquaintances there, Agnes, that I knew little about, I take it," said Sir Hugh, without any particular meaning in the remark, though the conscience of Agnes gave it one that sent yet a deeper crimson to her cheek. "That old grandmother of thine," continued Sir Hugh (who was very apt to give vent to his thoughts, without considering if his doing so in company was at all times quite correct or prudent), "that Lady Parr, I say, loved the young sparks something too well, and liked to see the house full of them. For myself, I was never much disposed for a daughter of mine living with her; but Dame Piper thought it would be a good thing, and that out of sight out of mind was likely enough to happen when a will might be making; and so Agnes was let be with her for a couple of years; and whilst

there came, I believe, half the young fellows in the county, dangling about her, just as moths buzz about a light ; there was too many of them, by far too many—enough to turn a girl's head ; but old Lady Parr liked to see her chairs and settles filled by a set of insignificant gallants, with their clinquant hose and their lace bands, and to see them prune themselves, and make their legs, in her presence, like a set of jays or monkeys.”

Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who saw how exceedingly painful this thoughtless speech of Sir Hugh was to Mistress Agnes, turned it off as fast as he could, by adverting to another subject ; and asked the young gentleman how he did, hoping that he found himself as well as could be expected after his late perils and providential escape.

The young man answered these enquiries with the utmost propriety and gentleness of manner ; thanked his deliverers in the most grateful and warm terms ; and, in fact, left nothing unsaid that ought to be said on such an occasion.

These kind thanks and enquiries made and answered, Sir Piers next expressed his concern for the state of the other person who had been saved from shipwreck, and asked how he did. To this the young gentleman replied, with a shake of the head, "I fear he is in much danger. During the night, I understand, he has not slept; and showed many symptoms of delirium, talking confusedly, and fancying himself, at times, at sea. This morning, however, he seems to have lucid intervals; for he knew me when I went to him, and asked when the Doctor would return."

"And when will he return?" enquired Sir Piers, looking at Robina as he spoke.

"I fear not till late in the evening," she replied; "for, on quitting the house last night, Doctor Hartshorn told me he was obliged to ride many miles to visit a patient, not so sick as the poor stranger, but one who was a person of consequence in the country."

"Pshaw!" said Sir Hugh; "that man who is most sick ought to be of most consequence to

the doctor ; he ought to have seen him again this morning."

" So thought the good housekeeper, it seems, your honour," said the Cornet, venturing on the first words he had spoken that morning ; " for she told me herself that owing to his absence, and her own alarm, she had sent for an old woman, held to have a curious hand in treating diseases or hurts, to look at the sufferer."

" An old woman !" said Sir Hugh ; " what old woman ?"

" I will vouch for it she has sent for that horrid old witch, Dame Gee," said Robina, " by whom, if ill looks could frighten away a disease as hers do young children, the cure would soon be effected. What think you, my dear father, of this, if it be Dame Gee that the housekeeper has sent for ? Shall I go and enquire ?"

" I think," replied Sir Piers, " that Dame Gee is an excellent nurse, and a bad-tempered woman. That she has some powerful remedies decocted from simples and herbs, I can myself

attest, having experienced their efficacy in my own person. She has had also more education than falls to the lot of many in her sphere: this, united with her shrewd sense, ill-humour, and a love, as I think, of playing on the credulity of the vulgar, in order to gain greater credit that she may really do them good, has obtained for this singular woman the character of a witch. The people also tell strange tales about her playing tricks at the holy well; but I will warrant she never yet raised the devil there, nor could show his face, if he came up, in the surface of the water."

This was another random shaft, that hit where no aim was taken: it sadly distressed poor Agnes: and her observant friend Robina, who without knowing what had chanced, saw she was embarrassed, now came to her assistance, but without guessing in what quarter it was most needed to ward off the blow.

"We will not waste time," she said, "in talking about Dame Gee; we all know her to be the best nurse in the country. Her stay here, therefore, at such a moment, will be useful; but

I will tell you what I think ought to be done. The unfortunate man, who is so much hurt, and has been delirious all night, ought to be bled; for Doctor Hartshorn told me so last night, before he went away. ‘If the patient,’ said the Doctor, in his formal way, ‘is not very much better, after the sedative potion I have just given him, in the morning let him be bled before the turn of the tide; and then give him a small quantity of extract of pearl in a stoup of compound waters.’ And when I said, Doctor, who is to bleed him, if you are away? what shall we do in such a case? he answered, ‘Send for Trim Foretop, the bone-setter and barber surgeon; for he can bleed man or horse as well as any one in the country.’”

“By all means,” said Sir Piers; “let somebody go instantly for Trim Foretop; I know him well, he is a very honest man, and one who has kept my hair and beard in order these ten years. Let him be sought for.”

“Please your honour, and Sir Hugh,” said Cornet Davy, rising and bowing respectfully to

his master, "I will go for him with all my heart; and as news is ever stirring at the barber's shop, I doubt not I shall pick up something that will keep your honour in ammunition of that sort till the Diurnal comes in with the account."

"Do so, Davy," said Sir Hugh, "and there needed not, Davy, to ask my leave; for whilst you are at Mount Edgcumbe, sharing the bounty of Sir Piers, I hold you to be as much his man as my own. And, hark ye, Davy; when you are about it, after doing your errand to Trim Foretop, just step home and see how all things are going on in the way of trade; and if the 'prentices have not been idle; and tell my wife, Dame Sibella, all that has chanced here, and that, possibly, I may not be able to leave Sir Piers Edgcumbe till to-morrow morning."

"I will do your honour's bidding," replied the Cornet, "without forgetting an item of the order; and I hope to be there and back again as fast as one of your honour's old scouts at the siege of Plymouth."

“ I doubt it not, Davy,” said Sir Hugh. “ Go thy ways, Davy,” he added, as the Cornet closed the door after him, “ thou honest compound of summing and serving, of double entry at an account, and single file at mounting a breach. Thou wast ever excellent in handling a calfskin ledger, or a leather gun; for the like of thee never have I seen, nor can hope to see again in a poor clerk, for courage and fidelity.”

Sir Piers now addressed the stranger, pressed him to take refreshment, and showed him every attention kindness could suggest. The young gentleman declined partaking of the morning meal, and declared that the housekeeper had long since supplied his wants before she had attended to the family.

“ You must, I fear, still feel almost unfit to leave your chamber,” said Sir Piers, “ after such perils as those you last night encountered May I ask,” he added, in a manner that showed a kind feeling of interest, and that not merely idle curiosity prompted the question, “ may I ask, if the relation is not too painful at this moment, by what means you came into the

boat, whose upset so near the shore enabled us, under Providence, to have the satisfaction of being of some service to you."

"You have a right, the most undoubted right, to know all," replied the young man, "since you have bought it at the price of your own danger, in a generous effort to save me. Blessed be the Lord of mercy, it was crowned with success! You, sir, have received me and my wounded and suffering attendant, with the same charity with which Publius received the shipwrecked Paul and the crew in the Island of Melita; but I have no power, as did that guest and holy apostle, to do you any act of service in requital for your generosity; but my gratitude and thanks to you, to your friends, and, above all, to yonder gentleman (pointing to Sir Hugh), can never cease but with life."

Sir Hugh Piper, though he acknowledged this speech by a bow, nevertheless winked at Sir Piers, and touched his forehead as he did so, as if bidding him observe that the young man wore his hair *cropped*; and, somewhat rashly, thinking his quoting Scripture was a

sure sign that the stranger could not belong to the right church (for it must be confessed the generality of the cavaliers were not at all too familiar with their Bibles), he at once, in his own mind, dubbed him a Roundhead and a Puritan to boot. If right or wrong in his conjecture remains to be seen.

“I was returning from Barbadoes,” continued the young gentleman, “whither I had been sent (and I confess to you much against my inclination) by my godfather and guardian, to take upon me the management of some property in that island, that would be mine on my coming of age. The *Old James*, the vessel in which I was embarked, and the *Virginia*, quitted the port of Barbadoes about the same time. We met on the high seas; and both ships encountered a fearful storm for many days. Yesterday, about noon, both were in distress; and so great was our danger that, seeing the ship we were on board must founder, my attendant and a few other persons determined to attempt saving themselves in the boat; I followed. It was fortunate we took this resolution: for, alas!

we soon after beheld a dismal sight — the Old James dashed to pieces on the Eddystone reef. The Virginia kept off the rocks; but we heard her firing, continually, signals of distress amidst the roar of the wind and the ocean; and sometimes we saw the flashes of her guns, when we could not hear their report.”

“ Those signals,” said Sir Piers, “ first drew attention to the vessel; we were warned of it by Hezekiah: and, in going down to the beach to see what could be done, I first perceived the boat. The vessel drove safe, though I doubt not without being much strained, into Cawsand Bay; and though the luckless boat upset and many were lost, yet, I thank God, that you, who are so young, and seem to be so promising, are saved, I trust, for many years of happiness.”

A sigh, a melancholy look, and a glance (as the quick-eyed Robina observed) stolen at her friend Agnes, as she sat looking down with unmoved gravity, were the only answers that the young gentleman gave to this speech.

Sir Piers now continued, “ Much as I lament that this attendant of yours should be so dan-

gerously hurt; yet, considering how rocky it is on the shore where the boat swamped, I rather wonder both were not killed, than feel surprised one should have received an injury likely to be fatal."

"My fear it may be so," said the young gentleman, "would induce me to trespass on your charity, and to request that you would suffer this unfortunate man to have the attendance of some godly minister of his own persuasion. He is a Presbyterian; and as he has intervals of perfect reason, I conceive it would be the fulfilment of a Christian duty, which we owe to each other, however much we may differ on more minute points of doctrine, to see that the sick bed of this man — it may soon become the bed of death — is not left without spiritual advice and comfort."

"Certainly," said Sir Hugh, "I am so far an advocate for liberty of conscience — though I hold no man has any right to dissent from the established Church that was, and that now is no more, let him think what he will — as to vote for what you propose. I say let the devil

have his own, if he will. Let Mahomet have his Turks, if they will be Turks; and the old Adam, as the Puritans call whatever they think wicked, take the Jews, if they will be Jews; and let Beelzebub have the pope at his departing, as the king of them all; and as to your man, I think Sir Piers can fit him with a shepherd of his own flock without sending a hundred miles for him."

"There is in this house," said Sir Piers, "a minister of the Presbyterian persuasion, who was last night most instrumental in saving you. He is an honest man, and I will have him warned of your desire. I doubt not he will most gladly offer any ghostly comfort on the present occasion. What may be the name of your attendant?"

"Gabriel," replied the young gentleman, "that is the name by which I call him; though when he is perfectly himself, he is somewhat jealous of a title he has assumed since what he deems his conversion. He has ever since called himself Grace-on-High Gabriel."

“ And if his creed be true,” said Sir Hugh Piper, “ he seems in a fair way to take a cruise to try the efficacy of his name. I wish him a safe voyage, though he sails not in the right-freighted ship under the King’s colours in the good Church of England ; but in a contraband trader, or, as I may say, a privateer, called the Sectary, that roams the high seas, picking up prizes, and making spoil of the ancient rights of a lawful and established foundation. And pray, young gentleman, having heard your servant’s name, if it is not an impertinent question, what may be your own ? ”

There was a moment’s pause, and a slight blush passed over the stranger’s cheeks before he said “ Amias Radcliffe is my name.”

No word or spell pronounced by an old witch in the working of her charm ever produced a more sudden effect than did these few words on all present, saving on Mistress Agnes, who still continued to look grave as she pursued some feminine work at a little table to which she had retired after her hasty and comfortless meal.

Sir Hugh Piper drew suddenly up as he was pacing the room ; a favourite exercise with him ever since he had been accustomed to walk the deck in some of his voyages to the West Indies. Again he intermitted the exercise of his pipe, and stared with both eyes on the young stranger, something in the same way as a man would stare at a great offender or malefactor who is going to be hanged, and who excites curiosity unmingled with respect.

A more decided though less broadly marked change appeared in Sir Piers Edgcumbe ; for he stepped some paces back on hearing *who* was his guest ; and though he did not fix upon him an eye of wonder, yet a gravity, amounting almost to austerity, settled on every feature of his face, as the single word “ Indeed ! ” passed his lips.

Robina also looked grave, though she had not done so till now since the day she heard of King Charles having been seized by the ruffian, Cornet Joice, at Holmby. Even Orgar seemed to understand that all was not right ; for on seeing his master draw back from the

stranger, he raised his head, though not his body, curled up his nose, showed his white fangs, and uttered a low and somewhat savage growl. "Peace, Orgar; be hushed, fool," said Sir Piers; "silence, I say."

The young man resumed his narration, and with something of more confidence, as if his spirit rallied at the sight of the internal repugnance or displeasure, thus silently but evidently evinced towards him by his auditors. "I am Amias Radcliffe, and an orphan," he said: "my godfather and guardian is a gentleman too well known in these parts for his name to be new to you, Sir Piers. Sir John Copplestone of Warleigh is the person to whom I owe obedience, till having completed my twenty-first year shall put me in possession of my liberty, and a fair estate, held for me in trust by my guardian during a long minority. I am Amias, the only son of the late Sir Walter Radcliffe—possibly you may already have heard my name?"

"I have, indeed, young man," said Sir Piers, sternly, "and I have heard it coupled with

bloodshed and rebellion. Young as you are, if report speaks truth, Sir Shilton Calmady, the royalist, fell by your hand at the siege of Ford House. I would you had borne another name."

"He did so," exclaimed the young man with spirit, "but it was in the heat of battle. I led on a party of volunteers in Waller's detachment to the siege of Ford House. We had passed the graff that surrounded it at extreme peril. Sir Shilton Calmady headed a sally made by the besieged, and as he rushed forward, sword in hand, cried aloud to his followers, 'Give the roundhead villains no quarter.'"

"Did I not say last night he was a round-head rascal by the cut of his hair, even before he came to his senses?" whispered Sir Hugh Piper to Robina.

The stranger meanwhile pursued his tale with an animation that sent no small quantity of blood into his pale cheeks, and lighted up an eye capable of the most varied expression. "No sooner was the order given, than

Sir Shilton Calmady rushed upon me to fell me to the earth : we encountered manfully, and fought a fair fight, till both were wounded and dripping with our blood ; at length Calmady fell. As a brave foe, to this hour do I lament him ; and I doubt not he would have done the like for me, had I fallen by his sword as he did by mine, in a just cause of quarrel.”

“ A just cause of quarrel !” cried Sir Piers. “ Young man, do you call that quarrel just which has its basis in rebellion ? Upsetting the venerable constitution of our laws, the union of Church and State ; a thing till now held sacred as the marriage bond—a union not to be sundered but by an act of violence and treason, by trampling on all old institutions, venerable, if but for age, and, like most aged things, therefore, become the scoff of fools ; to tear down the ancient monarchy of England, to imprison her King—a King whose concessions have but opened the door for higher and more impudent demands—a King whose goodness was of more than mortal

mould, whose heart was with his people, whose hopes are now in Heaven!—This is *your* cause; and for this did you shed the blood of a gallant man, of my beloved friend, Sir Shilton Calmady, at Ford House.”

“I did it from no private enmity,” said young Radcliffe. “Calmady and myself were both volunteers; he on the side of the King and of arbitrary power, whilst I was on that of the people and of liberty.”

“Ay, that is it, my brave fellow,” said Sir Hugh Piper, “that’s the cry with you all! You Roundheads start up, and would lay violent hands on the father who gave you life, to show the liberty of fanaticism and rebellion: you cut your fellow-countrymen’s throats, and cry it is all for the good of the people! and whilst hewing and hacking at an honourable gentleman, because his zeal was hateful to your heart, you knock him down stone dead, and say it was from no private enmity! Whip me, such nice distinctions, I say, with a cat-and-nine-tails. Why, Orgar, the water-dog there, would teach you better principles; since he

deems himself bound to be faithful to his master at all times and under all circumstances, and does not turn upon him, as you did upon the King, your master, on the first yelping of the ill-mannered dogs of the Parliament."

"The King abused his power," said Radcliffe: "he was arbitrary, oppressive, and led away by evil counsellors."

"It is false!" said Sir Hugh: "he was too meek, too condescending, too yielding to daring claimants."

"From the very beginning of his reign," cried the young republican, "there was a malignant and pernicious design to subvert all law, to make the prerogative of the crown overbear the rights of the Parliament, to destroy those of the people, and to bring in papacy."

"To bring in the devil and all his family, you mean," said Sir Hugh, "in the shape of Muggletonians, Arminians, Antinomians, Socinians, Puritans, Presbyterians, Ranters, Brownists, Independents, Seekers, Separatists, Waiters upon Providence, and a precious crew of the Family of Love! Satan, we know, is the

father of many families ; but his religious progeny, in variety and kind, out numbers all the rest."

"The King and his evil counsellors," said Radcliffe, "lost Rochelle, and betrayed the cause of the unfortunate Huguenots—a cause he ought to have espoused ; but he betrayed it by leaning to popery. He was eager after monopolies and ship-money, whilst he left the high seas so ill-guarded, that the merchant vessels became a prey to Turkish pirates."

"I lost a vessel," cried Sir Hugh, "by the turbaned thieves myself ; but I was never, therefore, unjust enough to lay the blame of it on the King's shoulders ; and I do not see what right you have, young gentleman — you, who never owned nor floated a carrack on your own bottom, to bring this charge against his Majesty. I think, in this case, at least, I am the best judge, whatever you may be concerning the liberties of the people !"

The ironical sneer with which this was said seemed calculated to keep up the heat of the argument ; and Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who had

far more consideration and prudence than Sir Hugh, having subdued the first shock he felt on hearing the name of the young volunteer by whom his friend Calmady was slain, somewhat recovered himself, and spoke in a milder manner, though still with distance and gravity.

“ Master Amias Radcliffe,” he said, “ since it has pleased Providence to make me, in some sort, the instrument of your preservation, when you were shipwrecked, in returning to your guardian, so near your native coast, and that you are now under my roof in the privileged character of a guest, and in the yet more sacred character of the unfortunate ; I say, since it has pleased Providence these things should happen, whatever natural reluctance I must feel at the sight of one who fought against my royal master and killed my friend, I nevertheless submit to a will wiser and higher than my own. Under my roof, Master Radcliffe, you are safe, and shall be respected ; since in your person I respect the bond of hospitality. Rest you here, therefore, and welcome, till such time as you can journey with comfort to your guardian’s

house. I will furnish you with all needful aid : and as I see you act the part of a kind master to your attendant, who is so grievously hurt, and, possibly, now on his death-bed, do not let any thing that may have this day passed, on the difference of our opinions, hasten your departure from my roof one moment before you have done all that humanity and Christian charity demand. Stay by your attendant, if you will, and see the result. This ascertained, your servant, better or dead, — and his death, perhaps, will ensue — I need not point out to you that the opposition of our feelings and situations make us but bad companions in one house, though that be my own. His danger determined, the sooner we part the better.”

This speech was delivered with the utmost gravity ; yet there was a frankness in the manner of the speaker that showed him to be sincere. The young man answered with some haughtiness : —“ I thank you, Sir Piers, for all your kindness ; but I trust I shall not long intrude upon it. The situation of this wounded man, an old and favoured servant of my

guardian, renders it impossible I should leave him till I hear the surgeon's opinion of his danger—that ascertained, I take my leave; and though conscious I quit the presence of one who scruples not to declare his enmity towards me, my gratitude for the worthless life which he, by the Lord's will, has been the means of preserving, can cease but with that life. I wish we might part on other terms; for I fear I must never hope to call Sir Piers Edgcumbe my friend, however deeply I may feel he has been such to me."

"You may truly say that," said Sir Hugh Piper, "since a friend in need is a friend indeed, and that has Sir Piers been to you."

Here the conversation dropped into cold formality; and soon after Hezekiah being summoned, Radcliffe went forward to visit his sick servant.

CHAP. X.

Dire was the tossing, deep the groans ; despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch ;
And over them triumphant death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.

MILTON.

It was the lively Robina who left the parlour, during the late painful scene, to call Hezekiah to do his duty to one of his own persuasion in the hour of distress. Robina had two motives for hastening her errand : the first arose from pity towards the sufferer, and the second from a hope that the presence of the minister, on so solemn an occasion, would put an end to the political disputes by calling off Radcliffe's attention to his servant ; as, in fact, it did most effectually. Gay as she was, both by nature and habit, yet Robina, as she passed along to summon the minister, sighed deeply, and felt that depression of spirits, which every well-

constituted mind cannot but experience when a fellow-creature lies in the same house, expecting each hour his final dismissal from mortality.

“Death,” said Robina gravely to Hezekiah, for she had no want of proper sense or feeling on suitable occasions, “Death brings serious thoughts in its visitation. It is that cloud which, however bright our sun, will cast a shadow upon it, as it passes on before our view.”

“True, young lady,” replied Hezekiah, who looked somewhat surprised at hearing the very gravest speech he had ever known pass the lips of Robina. “True, death is the *ultimum terribilium*; and what are we but a little breathing dust? for even when I look on your fair cheeks, Mistress Robina, I always endeavour to think of a churchyard, as a necessary keeping under of the spirit, that is apt to delight itself in such a fading toy. The evils of beauty, Mistress Robina, are manifold and manifest. First, beauty maketh womankind care little for the deformity of the soul, so long as the body do not partake of it. Secondly, it is a snare—

a snare to the pride of the heart and the desire of the eyes. Thirdly, it is a flower withered by a thousand chances, and hath no continuing in one place. Fourthly, it is the great Vanity Fair of outward adornments; a tempting to creature follies, and a dressing up of that poor silly flesh and blood, that must shortly become a prey to worms. I am sorry for you, Mistress Robina; and for your soul's sake, and the sake of the good-will I bear to you, I could wish to see you, if it might be so, with no more beauty than the most homely wench that ever found in her homeliness a weaning from the world, and a saving among the saints."

Robina, who probably would have considered such a circumstance in the change of her beauty as a very great evil instead of a very desired good, and had no mind to hear the "*fifthly*" of the sermon which Hezekiah seemed about to commence on the subject, cut him short in his discourse; and, leading the way, conducted him at once into the little ante-room, next to the sick man's chamber, where he was joined by Radcliffe; and both now passed into a long

low room, feebly lighted by two narrow windows, whose mullions were large and thick ; the room was paneled with a dark kind of wood that had a funereal appearance.

Within the ample chimney there sat, bending over a fire reduced to embers, an old crone, who had taken it in turn with another domestic to watch the sick man's bed during the night. She was so bent in the back as to have the appearance of being deformed, and her nose and chin almost met. Indeed, the picture drawn by Resina of the old hag who shows the enchanted mirror to Faustus, is so exact a resemblance of old Nanny Raffles, that we beg leave to refer all such readers, as may be curious upon the subject, to that print, for a sketch of this venerable personage. She sat covering over the fire, nodding her head as if half asleep, after her night's watching.

Here also might be seen in abundance the usual accompaniments of a sick room. Pipkins, spoons, phials, cups, and a dial to regulate the hours of giving the medicines to the patient ; with a bottle of strong waters, and a drinking

horn for the nurses, who possibly measured their own time of receiving such a comfortable support to their spirits and their fatigue, with the same wholesome exactness observed towards the sick whom they attended. Near the bed sat Dame Gee; a little crooked-legged table was by her side, on which lay some herbs, a phial or two, a book, and the asben wand, with which she was wont to perform all her charms. She was seated in a great elbow chair, with her legs on the foot cushion; whilst the housekeeper, a neat elderly woman, was seen near her, on a lower seat, and seemed to be looking up to Dame Gee, who was softly speaking, with that air of profound reverence and respect which persons of inferior quality are accustomed to observe towards the great in rank, or the celebrated in art.

As Radcliffe and Herakiah entered the room, the housekeeper rose up; but Dame Gee, as if her skill in the management of the patient rendered her mistress of the room, made a slight inclination of the head, but did not stir from her seat.

The enquiries of the new comers were answered by a shake of the head from the house-keeper, as she said, "Alas! 'tis like enough to be his ending; for he's been wandering all the morning, though he has his lucid intervals now and then, when he would call sometimes for a minister, and at others for strong waters. And then his wanderings would come again; and then there was nothing but about the sea and the ship, and you, sir (addressing Radcliffe), and another gentleman of these parts that he called upon by name, one Sir John Copplestone."

"Hush," said Radcliffe, "speak not so loud, he will hear you; it may disturb him. I will speak to him."

"No," said Hezekiah, "that will I; for it is my duty to go to him; and in this sickness the Lord and I will make his bed together." So saying, he advanced to the bed where lay Grace-on-High Gabriel.

He was a man between forty and fifty years old, of a strongly marked countenance, as brown as a piece of mahogany, with eyes large and

black, that in health had in them a character of fierceness, and now from want of sleep and fever stared nearly out of their sockets, and partook of the wild restlessness of delirium. His head was bound up with linen, and his jet-coloured hair, that peeped forth from under the bandages, appeared clotted with blood. His arms lay extended on the outside of the bed clothes: the old housekeeper had irritated him by a contest to make him keep his hands under them during half the night. He looked dreadfully ill; haggard, black round the eyes; and, though he moved with pain, was restless. Hezekiah touched the sick man's hand; it was burning with fever: having addressed some words to the patient, and no answer being given, Radcliffe approached the bed, and spoke. "Do you know me, Gabriel?" he said, in a soft voice: "Do you know where you are?"

"Burning bricks in Egypt," answered Gabriel, "and not able to come within the promised land, because of —— I will not speak his name. Because of one who has seared his conscience

with a red-hot iron, and keeps mine fast locked within the red velvet cabinet."

"The what?" said Hezekiah. "Alas! how he wanders. What is he talking about?"

"He seems to be thinking of Warleigh," said young Radcliffe, "and of the red velvet cabinet that stands in my guardian's own chamber."

"Do not open it," cried Gabriel, who caught these words. "Do not open it for worlds; or a spirit will come up like that of Samuel to Saul. For an old man will come up, covered with no mantle but with his sins; and will make quick work with us all, because I have delayed to execute his fierce wrath on this Amalek."

"Of whom speaks he, think you?" said Hezekiah. "Alas! this is a fearful sight. How long has he been thus?"

"All the night long," said the housekeeper, "roving at intervals all the night long; and saying terrible things at odd whiles, and talking about the sea and the ship."

"The ship!" cried Gabriel; "the ship had never been saved if I had done all the business."

“ Did you hear that ? ” said Hezekiah, groaning, as he turned to Radcliffe. “ I do not like it ; there must be some sad burthen on the poor soul, that the terrors of death should make such wild work in the brain and conscience. I would his reason might return, that I might talk to him ; for loth were I to think him one of the sons of perdition, knowing that God doth devise means that his banished be not expelled from him. I will watch, and presently awaken him, and pour out fearful threatenings.”

“ Into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot,” cried the sick man, who seemed to catch at all he heard, and to connect it with some strange subject that was uppermost in his thoughts : “ all the flesh-hook brings up let Sir John Copplestone take to himself, for so they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites that came thither. And bid Master Amias Radcliffe never go home again. Oh ! my head — my head ! ”

“ Now begins his pain again,” said the house-keeper, “ he has talked himself worse. See how he turns about, and moves his lips, that look as dry and as parched and as black ——”

“ Water ! water ! give me water ; drink, some drink,” cried the patient.

“ I will give it him,” said Radcliffe.

“ Not for worlds,” said the housekeeper : “ he has called for it all night, but I would not let him have it ; for Doctor Hartshorn said, if he calls for drink, give him nothing but my potion, and only that at the proper hours. He must not have cold water in such a fever as this is for all the world.”

“ He shall have it ; and I will answer it to Doctor Hartshorn,” said Dame Gee, who rose up with an air of authority, and held a goblet of water to the sick man, which he drank off with the eagerness of one famished. At the interference of a person so much held in respect for her high talents in doctoring, charming, and nursing as was Dame Gee, the housekeeper submitted ; and no longer opposed even a second glass of the same cooling beverage, which was both called for and granted with the same eagerness as the first. After this, the sick man lay down in his bed, and became quiet, whilst the housekeeper declared he

would soon have an interval of reason, as his delirium had hitherto come on by fits and starts, and that after he had been quiet a little while, he would know what he was about.

Hezekiah heard this with attention, and resolving to watch for such an opportunity, he begged all to leave the room, and to suffer him to remain alone by the side of the sick man's bed. All instantly agreed to do so, except Dame Gee, who obstinately insisted on maintaining her post, as she whispered the housekeeper in the ear, that unless she stayed, the charm she had set up (the power of which would not begin to show itself till a certain hour of the clock) would altogether fail. The housekeeper winked her acquiescence, and stating very civilly how wrong it was that all the nurses should leave the poor creature in such a state as he was in, obtained permission that Dame Gee should remain, if she consented to sit at the lower end of the room, where Hezekiah thought she would not hear the feeble words of the sick man in case he spoke.

The mistress of charms and spells consented

to this arrangement; and having placed herself in a good easy chair not far from the fire, she sat quietly down. Now, whether she really felt desirous to take this opportunity of gaining repose, or whether, to use a Devonshire phrase, she only “made wise” to do so, in the hope to listen to any word that might be spoken, we cannot say; certain it is, she threw her apron over her head, leant it against the high back of the chair, crossed her arms, and had soon the appearance of one who would compose herself for the enjoyment of a sound nap.

Hezekiah, who was neither the most penetrating nor suspicious of men, and who was too lately come into the neighbourhood to know much of the real character of Dame Gee, never suspected any artifice, if any there was worthy of suspicion; and having satisfied himself that the nurse, with the customary privilege of one who knew well her calling, was gone fast asleep, he took out his little clasped Bible, sat down by the bedside, and whilst ever and anon giving a look to the patient, (to watch for some symptoms of returning reason, or to see

if he inclined to rest,) instructed himself between whiles, in reading the twelfth chapter of the second book of Samuel; and so studied it, that at last the worthy man (whose suspicions of the bad state of Grace-on-High Gabriel's conscience had been raised by the confused words dropped by the sufferer in his delirium) read himself into the conviction, that he was, like a second Nathan, now called upon to awaken and reprove another David, for some foul blot on his pretensions to being a son after God's own heart; an adoption to which most of the sectaries of the day laid a very strong and particular claim.

For some time he read without perceiving any change in the quiet attitude of the exhausted patient; but at length he observed him stir, as his eye made the circuit of the room, as if he looked for some one he expected to see in it. A sigh, soft and low, escaped his lips; he placed his hand upon his forehead, and again looked anxiously around him. Hezekiah observed him attentively; and being convinced, by the steadiness of his eye, that he was now restored to reason, in one of those lucid intervals the house-

keeper had mentioned, he determined not to lose the opportunity; and with a gentle hand drew back the bed curtain, as he said, "Brother, do you know me, or do you guess who I am?"

"No," replied the sick man, in a weak but steady voice, "I saw something here just now — a shadow, may be — but I thought it was like young Master Amias Radcliffe."

"It was no shadow, but himself," said the minister. "How feel you now, friend?"

"Alas! weary, because of the daughters of Heth," said Grace-on-High Gabriel: "they have sore tormented me all night, and especially one old woman, who denied me drink;" and turning in bed as he looked languidly at his comforter, added, in a weak voice, "Who art thou, and what is thy name?"

"Hezekiah," answered the minister.

"Hezekiah!" re-echoed Gabriel: "if thou art as the good Hezekiah, bid the shadow of the dial go backward ten degrees like that of Ahaz, that I may have space given me to repent of this evil, and not go down into hell alive."

“ To repent !” exclaimed Hezekiah. “ Oh ! delay it not. I am, brother of sin and dust,” he continued, in a solemn and impressive tone, “ I am, though all unworthy, one of God’s chosen servants : set up, like the prophet Ezekiel, to cry aloud and spare not ; to be as a watchman to the house of Israel. And here do I perceive my call. For when I behold the man of sin, and see guilt in all its terrors shake to the very centre his departing soul ; if I forbear to say unto the wicked, ‘ thou shalt surely die,’ he shall die in his sin, but his blood shall be required at my hand. Even so will I call on thee ; for full well do I perceive by these wild flights of a distempered brain, the up-castings of a foul and filthy conscience. Go to ! disburthen it, make it a clean work, and let the man and the house be new altogether.”

Grace-on-High Gabriel answered this address with a deep groan.

“ I see it,” continued Hezekiah, “ I see it : some deep and foul blots, whitened over like a whited wall, now come out in their true colours. Hitherto the devil has been busy, as he ever is,

in his great work as a deceiver. But harken not to him; he was a murderer from the beginning. It is he who inspires furious thoughts, inflames the blood, fires the brain, pours out strivings and wrath, makes man as a raging lion eager for the slaughter."

Another groan from the patient answered to this description of the foul fiend.

"He is," continued Hezekiah, as his voice, manner, and eye became elevated with the energy of his own feelings, "he is the terrible one, when a greater than he makes him, like his creatures of thunder, of hail, and of the fiery storm, an instrument to punish a rebellious sinner. It is Satan who sets the brand to the slumbering embers of an evil conscience, flames them, makes death come armed from hell; and having been the tempter of man, now becomes the stern accuser of him to God and to his own soul. But turn again, turn ye; for why should ye die? Resist Satan; I will wrestle with him for you, and together we will beat him back, and his horn shall be broken, and his hinder part set towards the utmost sea. Oh! repent,

repent, and sweet shall be thy sleep, though the grave becomes thy bed; for the breast of the reconciled of God is as the temple of peace!"

Whilst Hezekiah made this speech, or, if the reader pleases, this sermon, in which there was so much of truth blended with the wild zeal and language of the fanatics of his day, his whole countenance and demeanour changed; for his strong-marked features had in them an expression of that high enthusiasm, which (if it be not profane to use such a comparison) made them shine something in the way, we may suppose, as did the face of Moses, as it became radiant under his strong sense of the divine presence in which he stood, when he received and gave forth the law to awe and to direct mankind.

In the brow of Hezekiah there was a solemn elevation: sincerity gave feeling as well as energy to his words; and he stood by the side of the sick bed, his tall figure full of dignity and command, exhorting, counselling, and persuading the wounded, alike in body and in soul,

to redeem the time that yet remained, however brief it might be. Gabriel listened, uttering every now and then a stifled groan : at length he made an effort to rise up ; Hezekiah assisted him, and ably (for he was strong and powerful whenever he exerted himself to put forth his strength). Gabriel sat up in bed, propped by pillows, and looking as ghastly as some of the old gothic pictures of Lazarus, bound hand and foot in the garments of the grave. Gabriel looked at the minister, and then slowly round the room ; and finally cast a speaking eye on Hezekiah, as he pointed with his finger to Dame Gee, who was dosing in the chair, as much as to say, “ She is in the room.”

“ She sleeps,” said Hezekiah. “ Notwithstanding, if it is thy wish, I will awaken and dismiss her.”

“ Do so,” said Grace-on-High, “ and bid her get me the doublet I wore before I was laid in this bed. In the close pocket there is a small horn case, well secured, containing some letters, that ere I die — if I must die — I will put into Master Amias Radcliffe’s hands ; and

they will tell him all — all. I have not strength nor memory clear enough to speak at this hour — only get me the doublet.”

Hezekiah looked round the room, and saw no doublet: it instantly occurred to him, that as it must have been wet when Gabriel, on the previous night, had been put to bed, most likely his clothes had been removed, for the purpose of getting them dried by the fire. He now determined to ask for the doublet (but without saying for what purpose); and thinking to kill two birds with one stone, to get rid of Dame Gee, and to make her bear his message to the house-keeper (whilst he hastened to receive the confession of the sick man ere the return of delirium should prevent its being made), he walked up to her, and giving her no very gentle shake, disturbed her slumbers, either real or pretended, and desired her to go and enquire for the doublet of the shipwrecked man.

Dame Gee seemed hard to awaken; but when awake, strange to say, she made no objection to quitting the room, though she had before been adverse to it, and instantly set off

to do as she was required. In a short time she returned, bringing the doublet with her, which was but half dry. She would then have resumed her station, but Hezekiah forbade her in a tone of authority; and desiring her to go and send in Master Radcliffe, as the wounded man desired to see him, he shut the door upon her, and secured it with a bolt.

He now brought the doublet to the bed: Gabriel looked eagerly upon it; and Hezekiah examining a closely contrived and secure pocket in the breast, that the sick man pointed out, found it open, and nothing in it.

The minister, who conceived the case with the letters was of importance, from the manner of the sick man when he spoke of them, instantly acquainted the housekeeper with the loss: she bustled, and made every enquiry, but nobody knew any thing about the matter, and least of all Dame Gee, who declared she had been disturbed from a sound sleep to go and fetch the doublet, and executed her commission in no time at all. The housekeeper, Dame Gee, and all the servants, agreed in the opinion,

that the horn box must have been lost when the sick man was tossed and tumbled about in the waves; for they did not see but if the rocks and the water could knock a man of the head, so as nearly to kill him, why they should not be able to unfasten an inside pocket, that was secured by no lock and key, and only by an old button. Whether this mode of reasoning on the subject might be false or true, Hezekiah could do no other than submit to it; and Gabriel, on hearing the horn case had been lost in the sea, begged very earnestly that Master Radcliffe would not delay to come to him. Hezekiah sent a swifter messenger than the old housekeeper, who had stayed to gossip about the doublet and the loss on the road; and Radcliffe soon appeared.

CHAP. XI.

A fox, full fraught with seeming sanctity,
That fear'd an oath ; but, like the devil, would lie :
Who look'd like lent, and had the holy leer,
And durst not sin before he said a prayer.

DRYDEN.

As Radcliffe approached the bed, it struck him that there was a very great change in his servant ; and calling Hezekiah aside, he said in a whisper, “ Reverend man, have you never heard that when any one, dangerously sick, has been for many hours deprived of reason, the return of it is generally the forerunner of death ? I am much deceived if yonder man is not fast approaching his last moments. Look at his eye, it is watery and glazed. See how he seems to shiver, and catches at the sheets, whilst his cheeks are shrunk and his lips are livid. I am sure this change is more than common. How I wish the doctor would come ! ”

“ If you think so,” said Hezekiah, “ for the

sake of Him who saith ‘ How oft is the candle of the wicked put out,’ delay not thou to speak with him ; for truly his soul could not pass in peace till he saw you ; and he said he had much to tell you, of woful consequence. There is no one here but ourselves.”

“ I will give him his potion first,” said Amias Radcliffe : “ the housekeeper told me, as I came in, that it was the hour. Perhaps the medicine may help him to speak with more ease.”

Radcliffe gave it ; and as Gabriel, who swallowed it with extreme difficulty, returned the cup to his young master’s hand, he looked wistfully in his face, sighed, and said, “ Come near me, Master Amias, and listen ; for I am sure I am a dying man : and since I felt so, all my former life seems changed. All I thought good before, all I wanted to gain, now is nothing. I would give all, like Dives, for a drop of water to cool my tongue ; or, what is better, for that pool which should wash away my sins.”

“ Gabriel,” said Hezekiah, jumping up from the bed-side, where he had been quietly sit-

ting; “ Gabriel, do not entertain such an unprofitable wish; do not sigh for the waters of Bethlehem, as did David out of a vain spirit. Do not become a dipper or anabaptist, ’tis as foolish as a pædobaptist; and I will argue with you respecting the unprofitableness of it in every point, as well as could Baxter himself in his answer to ——”

“ Peace,” said Radcliffe, “ he is in no case for disputations; let us hear what he would say.”

“ I would say,” continued Gabriel, “ that whilst I thought myself in the liberty of the promise, I find I have been but in the house of bondage all my life long, making bricks without straw, under a hard taskmaster. Come near, for oh ! I am very sick, and I feel cold; and the room seems to go round with me, and —and — where are you?”

“ Here,” said Radcliffe : “ he is worse, Hezekiah — call for help !”

“ No, no,” cried Gabriel, in a broken voice, “ it is all in vain; death knocks at the door, he knocks hard: trembling takes hold of my

flesh : in a minute I come. Yet, oh ! merciful Father, give me breath to warn you, Master Amias ——”

“ Of what ? Of whom ? ” said the astonished Radcliffe.

“ Of your guardian, whom you have fearfully offended — in a way, I fear, not to be forgiven.”

“ Not to be forgiven ! ” repeated Radcliffe with amazement : “ this is incomprehensible ; surely my refusing to ——”

“ Let me speak all I have to tell,” said Gabriel, faintly. “ He sent you to Barbadoes under my care, at a time when you were in wretched health. He charged me to keep you there, let you be never so much worse. I did all I could, but you would not stay. The rest of his orders about you were written to me in letters ; I kept them, with one important paper that concerned you, in the horn case, next my bosom. I kept them thus carefully, that if any thing unexpectedly should come of it, I might have the means to show him his own com-

mands for what I did — and — worse than this ——”

Gabriel paused; for he spoke with extreme pain, and some marks of blood appeared upon his lips. He had, in fact, bled so much internally (since the chief injury he had received was in the chest), that it struck Radcliffe this return of the bleeding was, perhaps, a fatal symptom. Shocked at what he had already heard about his guardian, though in some measure it did but confirm his own suspicions, he eagerly listened, in the hope to gain farther intelligence before Gabriel might become too weak or too lost in mind to tell it all collectedly.

“Beware of him,” said the dying man: “do not go home — that is, not till you are full twenty-one years old; and then ——” Gabriel paused; Radcliffe hung over him, scarcely drawing breath while he listened; ‘and then go suddenly to Warleigh, and insist ——’ Again Gabriel paused; and seemed so faint and exhausted, that Radcliffe snatched

up a bottle of essence which stood upon the table. The strong pungent power of the essence for a moment had its effects, and once more the sufferer ejaculated a few broken accents, though it should seem the clearness of his faculties was again overcast; and that though he did not wholly forget the subject of his discourse, his memory and perception were too much affected for it any longer to be connected. "He is a dreadful man," said Gabriel, "and hath many devices in his heart; and, like the grave, he never has enough."

"Of whom speak you?" said Hezekiah. "Beware what you say; beware, sinful man, how you accuse another—that you put not your own burthen on another man's back. The tongue is a little fire, soon kindled and very deadly in its strife."

"Peace, I pray you," said Radcliffe: "I know well of whom he speaks. Gabriel, go on. Can you tell me any thing of my father's death—any particulars? for I was a child when it hap-

pened, and my guardian never speaks on that subject."

"There is a cause for it," said Gabriel, in a low hollow voice; and, looking wildly round the room as his eye, though dull and watery, seemed to seek for some object it feared to meet, he added, in an agitated manner, "Do not let Sir John Copplestone come in, and I will tell you all."

"He is not near you, Gabriel," replied Radcliffe; "he does not know but that we are still at Barbadoes."

"Does he not?" said Gabriel, as a ghastly smile stole over his features; "but the devil does, and he may tell him; for they are close as brothers when there is any thing to be got; and he will have all when your godfather dies."

"This is dreadful!" exclaimed Radcliffe. "Gabriel, if you have sense enough left to understand my words; I solemnly adjure you, as you must answer to Him who can pardon and can save at the dreadful day of judgment, tell me all you know. Tell me of those injuries my guardian may have done, or may

meditate to do, against me : Speak ! What have been his wicked acts — what yours ?”

“ Mine !” cried Gabriel, in a tone that had in it an accent of horror ; “ it was not mine : I did but put my hand as a witness to it. Will, him they call Black Will, beware of him ! But wherefore do the wicked live, and become old, and are mighty in power ?”

“ He wanders sadly,” said Radcliffe ; “ is there no way to fix his attention ?”

“ I feel it,” said Gabriel, shuddering ; “ his hand is all cold — death freezes up my blood ! But there is heat enough, they say, in hell. I wonder how Korah and his company bore it ; for as for us we are many, and can put it out : all but one may — all but one ; since nothing can quench the fierce flame kindled for him. Yet your guardian did nothing but feed it with a few papers ; and there they burn, the flame never dying, to consume himself. What o’clock is it ?”

“ This distracts me !” said Radcliffe. “ What do you mean by papers ? Gabriel, what papers have been all thus burnt ?”

“All! I did not say all,” exclaimed the miserable man; “one he dares not burn—for his own sake, he dares not—and he keeps that sealed to his own condemnation.” Again he stopped, and a slight convulsion passed over his face, as he caught and grasped Radcliffe’s hand. His touch was shuddering; it was cold and clammy as that of a corpse.

“What paper does my guardian keep, and where?” said Radcliffe, in an eager manner.

“In the red velvet cabinet,” replied Gabriel, with a groan; “there is kept the fatal secret of your — your ——” he fainted as he spoke the last word.

Radcliffe was now compelled to call for assistance; and the old housekeeper, with many other servants, came running into the room. By strong applications the wretched man was once more restored to consciousness; but he could swallow nothing that was attempted to be poured down his throat. His eye became more watery, a cold sweat bathed his temples, and stood in large drops on his brow, as the convulsed twitchings of his hands and the

muscles of his face, together with the coldness of the extremities, showed that he was dying.

Hezekiah saw his condition, and felt shocked that he should die without uttering a prayer for God's mercy, though the confession of his sins was, perhaps, in these moments as acceptable, considering the wandering state of his mind. Hezekiah prayed by him and for him, in a deep and emphatic manner, and conjured the sufferer, if he had but the power to utter one word, to let it be a call for mercy on his soul.

“Thou wilt not die thus,” he said; “thou must not die thus, and go before the Lord of heaven and earth — He who stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing — and yet say not so much as Lord have mercy on me !”

Whether Hezekiah had ever heard or not of the celebrated scene representing the death of Cardinal Beaufort, we cannot tell : possibly he might ; though certainly had he considered that so fine a lesson to the dying sinner was to be found in what he deemed an abomination — a

stage play — he would hardly, as he actually did, desire Grace-on-High Gabriel to make some such sign as Henry did the Cardinal, to show his trust in God.

Gabriel's lips were seen to move : he struggled — he strove — but no sound came ; for all power of speech was denied him, so great was his exhaustion. “ Put thy hands together,” said Hezekiah with great earnestness : “ let me but see thou has so much of understanding left as to show the outward mark or sign of prayer, and my soul will be comforted for thine.”

“ He cannot,” said Radcliffe : “ look how he shrinks and shudders, as if the air blew cold upon him, yet is there none.”

“ The air !” exclaimed Hezekiah : “ is not the thin air the minister through which comes the sightless, yet sight-conveying, light ? Even so is the Spirit unseen, but piercing, the minister of God's truth. Oh ! that it might pass to yonder sinful man !”

A faint cry, as of extreme agony, followed soon after by that death rattle of the throat that so often attends dissolution, now convinced

all present the last moments of Gabriel were at hand. Hezekiah continued to pray for him, even when all sense was gone to enable him to join in the petition. Whilst doing so, he raised his eyes from the sight of agonised nature to lift them up to heaven; but when Hezekiah again fixed them upon mortality and earth, all was over; and that frame, which had so lately contained a spirit, active, capable of weal or woe, alive to the influence of hope or to the terrible alarm of conscience, was a lifeless corpse!

Radcliffe looked on in silence, shuddering with internal horror at the terrible scene of death he had witnessed in one who was apparently so ill fitted to meet the last enemy of mankind.

Hezekiah, with Christian charity, closed down his eyes; and for the edification of those who stood about the bed, he thus addressed them: —“ Gabriel is gone,” said the worthy man with a sigh; “ it is not for us to say whither. Let us hope that some internal sign of repentance — seen but by Him whom the smallest thing doth not escape for mercy — may have

found grace and acceptance even for this sinner. No, my brethren, let us not scan the ways of God, but rather our own ways; and so make this bed of death as an example to us all. Death to most men differs in its consequences, but as men differ in their preparation. To the good soldier of our Lord, a swift summons is but as a swift victory. It is when the flaming sword of God cuts off the wicked, that there is captivity and conquest; even as the sons of Eli were suddenly cut off because of their transgressions. Many are the ways of death, but one to that of life; and truly is it found in the path of God; for let the terrible ones of the earth, in the greatness of their state, bow down millions before them, yet when the appointed hour is come, neither death nor conscience, as ye have lately seen, will be stayed. I have said ye are gods, but ye shall die like men. Remember this, friends, and profit by it."

The awful scene that had just passed, the solemn tone of admonition in which Hezekiah concluded this address, with the sight of the lifeless corpse, deeply affected all present; and

the old housekeeper sobbed audibly, as on Radcliffe and Hezekiah leaving the chamber, she proceeded to direct the performance of those last offices paid to the bed of death.

CHAP. XII.

His pole with pewter basins hung,
Black rotten teeth in order strung,
Ranged cups, that in the window stood,
Lined with red rags to look like blood,
Did well his threefold trade explain,
Who shaved, drew teeth, and breathed a vein.

GAY.

OUR readers will recollect, that before the sudden and fatal change appeared in Gabriel, Cornet Davy had been despatched to the house of Trim Foretop, the barber surgeon, to fetch him, that Grace-on-High might be bled, agreeably to the orders of Doctor Hartshorn, in case he should not be better in the morning. Now, as Davy had set off to do his errand as soon as commanded, he could not possibly know how unavailing it would be ; and that grim death, who often steps in to take his turn with the doctor, should in this instance have so speedily settled the matter, quite contrary to the wor-

thy practitioner's prognostics respecting the result of his own skill, or the housekeeper's in favour of the noted Dame Gee, whose charms and spells had been so vigorously employed in aid of the medicaments—charms and spells hitherto considered infallible, and very likely to be so considered again—since the failure of a witch, fortune-teller, or empiric, was never yet known to open the eyes of the credulous, determined, as they are, to keep them shut to their own folly; and thus do they verify the observation of Butler, which avers—

The pleasure is as great,
In being cheated as to cheat.

To return to Cornet Davy. He continued his way to the barber's shop, amusing himself, as he did so, with calculating how much would be the return of profit Sir Hugh Piper might expect to receive on certain goods committed on speculation to the West Indies; how best to turn the same profit to account in service for the King: since it was one of the peculiarities of the mercantile Cornet's character, that

he might be said to think in conformity with his master. Davy was, indeed, in all things honest and disinterested. He had ever preferred his master's benefit to his own; and now, with the same liberality of principle, he followed the worthy knight's example, and preferred the interests of the imprisoned Charles Stuart to those of Sir Hugh Piper.

Whilst the Cornet is thus entertaining his own mind with such lively ideas, and (like Alnaschar, whilst calculating the future consequences of the product of his basket of glass,) is busied in speculating on how many plots, battles, armies, victories, &c. &c. must necessarily follow on Sir Hugh's devoting his whole substance to the service of the King—till the good Cornet, in his pleasant fancy, had fairly beaten old Noll, hanged the Parliament, burnt the covenant, restored episcopacy, and resealed the King in safety upon his throne—we must beg to leave him and his castles in the air, and step on before him to the barber's shop—a place of so much consequence, and so very different to what it has become in these degenerate

days, that it deserves our notice somewhat at large.

Now, alas! the lack of periwigs, the no-fashion of wearing beards with pointed peaks, and the more simple mode of wearing the hair in its natural state, have altogether so much reduced this once distinguished craft of barbering, that the very character of the English barber himself is changed. No longer a man of science, all the importance of his calling is fallen to rise no more, and he is now sunk into some poor miserable shaveling, whose utmost attempt at complicated art is that of uniting the practice of making ladies' curls and *headdresses* (for we were once informed by an artisan of no small celebrity, that the word *wig* was become vulgar, and never used by *gentlemen* in the trade), with the manufacture of whiskers, and the snipping of locks so close and so short, as if all the young men of England of the present day had determined to revive the close-shearing fashion of the puritanic Roundheads in the times of King Charles.

The dwelling that formed a habitation for

Trim Foretop, of barbering fame, was a long low building, or rather cluster of buildings; for it seemed as if many of the apartments had been added at various periods, something in the way of patching; and, like all pieces of such work, the one part did not very well correspond with the other. It was situated in the suburbs of the good town of Plymouth, where it had undergone no small damage (a circumstance sufficient in itself to render patching necessary), during the time of the siege: when that fierce royalist of the West, Sir Richard Grenville, of topering memory, had sat down before the walls, to smoke out, as he said, the Lord Roberts and Sir Andrew Carew, who had both united to maintain the town for the Parliament. Now, though Sir Richard certainly loved his pipe, and smoked it with much more success than he achieved in the endeavour to execute his threat on the defenders of Plymouth, yet he did not suffer his *leather* guns*, to whose exercise he was partial, to stand still: for he fired and blazed, and battered away, till the suburbs

* Guns made of leather were used in the siege of Plymouth.

were sadly damaged, and in many parts reduced to ashes.

One of these shattered dwellings Trim Foretop had contrived to occupy, after the siege, at a low rent, on the express condition that he should repair it; and this he did at the very cheapest rate, helping himself from the ruins of the old and battered buildings around him to any such materials as first came to hand; and as the house had many apartments, running side by side (not unlike hutches for rabbits), the provident Mistress Foretop conceived her domicile might be made useful in more ways than one, and therefore determined on the letting of lodgings. The door was sheltered by a projecting porch, accommodated on either side with substantial stone benches, which, though not the most soft or inviting for the gossips, nevertheless frequently found occupants, when the little shop was as full as it could possibly be with idlers or customers—two sorts of visitants that left honest Trim very little leisure on his hands; since, in his more regular hours of business, he had no lack of it; and if he were

busied in doing nothing, he had plenty of neighbours willing to help him.

Above the doorway projected that well-known cognisance of a barber, namely, a pole proper, having its origin in the most remote antiquity ; for some refer it to the Norman, and others even to the Saxon times ; though we something doubt the very existence of the craft during the latter named period, since it is an established fact that the Saxons wore their hair long and uncut, as well as their beards. The pole over Trim's door was garnished with a red twisted riband, to denote that bleeding at the arm might be had within, as well as at the chin, when, by an unlucky slip of the hand, a thing that not unfrequently happened, blood chanced to be drawn in the operation of the razor.

Like all shavers, from the days of the famous barber of the Arabian tales down to the present times, Trim was noted for talking. How could he be otherwise ? for, indeed, we conceive a silent barber to be a thing so much out of nature, that wherever found he would infallibly be looked upon with curiosity and wonder ; the same as

any other phenomenon that is seen to act contrary to regular and customary laws. Many reasons may be assigned to account for this propensity to talking in the knights of the razor; the rapid circulation of news, brought in by every customer, and retailed to the next occupant of the shaving bench or chair, begets in the barber a habit of chattering; and not the least temptation to talking on the part of such a practitioner, may result from the absolute command he has over his antagonist, especially should such antagonist be disposed to dispute or to contradiction, or to make assertion supply the place of truth, and popular opinion that of sound judgment—things of frequent occurrence in political debates, where the disputants are, generally speaking, inclined to hear no one so much as themselves, having long since determined, that no one else can be heard to equal profit and advantage. Now in all such debates, your barber unquestionably holds the upper hand; for whilst under operation, his antagonist can scarcely be said to be in talking order; and if he venture on a word too much, so completely

has his opponent the command of his chin, he can suddenly overwhelm, or cut short the argument, by lathering him with soap, by twitching a hair awry, or by fairly letting blood from those very lips that are offending. Such summary measures effectually silence an opponent, and leave an open field for the triumph of his unfettered adversary, who, like all great talkers, at length gets so much accustomed to the use of the tongue, that he is apt to fall into the mistake of thinking it necessary he should find a supply of it for the rest of the company, till finally he lets no one be heard but himself.

The interior of Trim's shop was hardly less curious than its exterior, and displayed as many varieties in trade, as did the dwelling in architecture. In the windows might be seen, placed to the greatest advantage to regale the eyes of the passengers as they went along the street, a couple of crossed arm bones, like the *memento mori* of a tombstone. This singular ornament of a barber's shop had, we believe, its origin in the civil wars, when broken limbs and broken heads being more plenty than sound ones, the

barbers took upon themselves, in a regular way, the trade of what was called *bone-setters*; a denomination by which many were alone distinguished, and in which they frequently dropped the less noble title of barber, though they still flourished the razor in a dignified way. A choice set of old teeth, strung like a cherry-stone chain, showed Trim operated about the mouth in more ways than one, and could extract a tooth as well as curl a mustachio. Combs, scissors, and razors were but the more ordinary adornments of his shop windows; since first and foremost appeared sundry phials, boxes, and round-bellied bottles, each containing some precious drug or elixir pertaining to the healing craft, and set forth with all the consequence and conspicuousness such things required. There might be seen extract of pearl, aurum potable, confection of amber, pearl in boxes, bezoar stone, rosa solis, and compound waters, &c. &c. with many other precious and costly drugs then held as essential in the practice of medicine, but which have long since disappeared from our more improved and

modern pharmacopeia. A table, a smooth-worn high-backed chair, with two or three stools, and a settle in the chimney nook, constituted the furniture of the apartment; not forgetting a birding gun and a brace of old petronels that hung above the heavy stone chimney piece, more, perhaps, for ostentation than profit; for the gun was without a lock, and both the pistols were *hors de combat*, not having been repaired since some old trooper had exercised them so well as to render them useless by hard service in the late civil broils.

But one thing more demands our notice in this curious medley; it was a certain dark, dingy, corner-cupboard: this, if report spoke truth, was said to contain many things pertaining to the black art, in which it was shrewdly suspected Trim had been a dabbler; for now and then, on the door being left a-jar, some curious eyes would peep in, and beheld, it was averred, sundry parchment books, brown, and worn in the covers; certain scrawled papers, whose signs looked like those of the zodiac in caricature; several large-bellied glass bottles,

with a child in pickle in one of them, a knot of twisted snakes in another, and the body of a young alligator in a third. Few of Trim's customers, who had ever once seen these things, felt disposed for a second peep; and some malicious persons were wicked enough to say, that he rather winked at than discouraged this curious spirit of prying into his secrets, from a consciousness that such evidence of his being a proficient in the occult sciences could not fail to increase the reverence in which he was already held by all admiring gossips and friends.

A man's pursuits generally convey a pretty good idea of his character, except in those cases where nature and habit are determined to be at variance, and the latter refuses to consult or to improve the former. In Trim Foretop the one did not contradict the other; and we have said so much of his business, his dwelling, and its appurtenances, that little remains to be said of himself. He was a light, thin, active person, not juvenile nor yet old; had a busy bustling air, that seemed to put every body

about him into motion, and to make ten times as much fuss about doing the slightest, or the greatest thing, as it required. He busied himself for all his friends, and with every body's affairs, except his own; and those, with the true regal mode of government, he left to be managed by his prime minister; or, in other words, by his wife, who, like most ministers in office, felt no inclination to resign, and kept the reins, when she had them, with a tight managing hand, though not without occasional murmurings that her husband would sometimes start wide away from her control.

In one thing, however, Trim and his wife perfectly agreed, and that was in thinking themselves to be great politicians, though they did not exactly adopt the same line in their political conduct to the customers. The lady, for example, was a most uncompromising royalist; whilst Trim, though he had a leaning that way in his heart, used more prudence in his behaviour; for, wisely considering that if cavaliers must have their beards peaked, and their locks curled, Roundheads must be close cropped and

shaved, he could manage, without any violent opposition of conscience, to keep on civil terms with both parties ; since, most truly, did Trim observe, that loyalty, though a very excellent thing, would neither make his pot boil, nor put on his ears again, if he chanced to lose them in the pillory by meddling, though but in conversation, as did many a brother of his fraternity, with the powers that were uppermost in those dangerous times.

Let not our readers suppose, because we say this, that Trim was, therefore, hard upon, or even shy of, the cavaliers. Far from it : he was shy of none but publicly suspected persons ; and any body, King's man or Parliamentarian, who came to his shop in a civil way to get shaved, was welcome to hear the news ; to a seat under the stone porch, or on the settle in the chimney corner, or even to a cup of ale on extraordinary occasions ; and so long as there was present no sharking attorney (on the look out for malignants), he might talk politics, if he liked it, till he could adjust the affairs of the nation, or re-establish the church ;

and Trim would never say a word about it, nor check the freedom of debate, of which he was a great admirer, so long as no person contradicted him ; and his wife did not fail to show him she was a friend to the same liberty, by exercising upon himself the unbridled licence of her tongue. An apprentice boy, and a little parish girl, completed Trim's family, saving the lodger, who must not here be forgotten, as he will be found a person of some importance in the progress of our drama.

Captain Coleman, for such was his name, answered exceedingly well, in his outward appearance, to that description which Falstaff, the merry wag, gives of Justice Shallow—"He was, for all the world, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring, or like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife." The Captain was exceedingly thin, and his limbs appeared modelled by no skilful hand ; for his legs were so curiously curved as to resemble a bow or half circle in their inward line : in short, most people would have fancied the Captain to be bandy-legged ; but that he

(who had a frank way of referring all things, even his very defects, to his military career,) declared that the constant habit for many years of sticking fast to the saddle, and managing a high-spirited charger by the pressure of his knees, had at last produced this form of line, which he considered to be one most advantageous, and much to be desired, by all riders in a troop.

His arms, when he moved, swung about like the sails of a windmill; and he walked and managed his cloak with a ruffling air, like one not unacquainted with the swaggering gait practised by the gallants of the day, who haunted Turnbull Street, or the Garden of Piccadilly.* His nose was hawked, and of considerable dimensions; a long chin, lank cheeks, black hair, a fierce glance, with upturned mustachios, and a pair of eyebrows that at a little distance looked as if they were made with a burnt cork; a drunkard's eye, red, watery, and given to blink-

* In the times of Charles the First, Piccadilly was a house noted for gambling, having gardens used for games of an illegal and disreputable nature.

ing, all helped to render remarkable the outward figure of the gallant Captain Coleman. He had held the King's commission in the dissolute and abandoned troop of Sir Richard Grenville; a leader in every way worthy of his men. To account for the Captain's being at liberty after his General, Sir Richard, had decamped to France, we have only to state, that all the world said he had taken the covenant. Now, though we, in our capacity of biographer of this valiant personage, beg leave to disavow all intentions to misrepresent him, or to become the promulgator of scandal; yet we felt bound to repeat a statement so generally averred and believed concerning him, though possibly it might not be true, as he still talked big respecting his loyalty; and more especially in moments when there was no great fear that doing so would turn to his own prejudice; and, it must be confessed, that of the two, he really liked the King better than the Parliament.

He remembered, with sincere pleasure, the service he had seen in Grenville's army, with all its charming licence and adventures; such

as knocking Roundheads on the head, storming and pillaging towns, exacting fines and free quarters, and other such petty benefits of war as “jumped with his humour.” The Captain, who ever retained, like the noted Captain in the play, a great value for his title, thinking, perhaps, as did that worthy, that it was an excellent “travelling name,” felt ever jealous of being called by any other appellation.

For his dress, it was slovenly, and not over clean; yet it retained a touch of finery that spoke some vanity in the wearer. His cloak was scarlet, dingy, and full of stains; yet laden with faded lace; and his coat was so covered with clinquante (a sort of tinsel imitating a more costly ornament) that scarce could the ground of it be seen. All his clothes smelt of tobacco; so that he wafted along with him a gale of that perfume wherever he came; and for his mouth, it breathed forth fumes of old sack and Jamaica rum, as fast as he opened his lips. His jack boots, with iron-shod heels, gave a noisy consequence to his step; a thing

of some value to men who, like our Captain, feel their own importance to be of doubtful admission, and who would therefore consider nothing as insignificant which helped to give an air to that personal audacity they would endeavour to make pass current for the bold bearing of brave and daring men. A long tuck hung by his side; a collar of Flanders lace, many times darned, yet still ragged, showed, as the Captain thought, something courtly; and a black velvet bonnet (with a single white plume, that nodded over the left shoulder), set knowingly on the head, gave the finishing air of consequence to the whole and entire man designated by the name of Captain; and who, whilst in command, was so zealous in his duty, that if his men were false or true, royalists or ragamuffins, he was nothing nice about them, so long as they knew well how to pillage a town after a siege, and to let a good share of the spoil find its way to his quarters.

Having said thus much of Mistress Foretop's lodger, we shall at present only add that at the time we introduce him to our reader, Captain

Coleman had walked out of his own particular little cabin into the shop ; that being the place of general rendezvous for news, company, and customers, in Trim's house. His coming, like that of many other great personages, sent forth a fragrant announcement before him, though not one of musk or roses ; but the rolling vapours of a new-lighted pipe, that scented all the house, first made Mistress Foretop sensible of the approach of her lodger.

She had her own particular reasons for being most exceedingly civil ; as, on this morning, the Captain had promised to pay her a certain account of moneys due some time ago ; and though he had hitherto been pretty regular in such matters, yet in the present instance he was very much behind-hand. How the Captain lived (that is to say, whence arose his means) was a circumstance Mistress Foretop could not exactly tell, not being wholly admitted to his confidence. But as she very justly observed to any gossiping neighbour who might be curious on the subject, so long as he paid her as an honest man ought to do,

it was no business of hers; the Captain might have his own reasons for being silent about his means; and, perhaps, no unlikely thing, might not at all times know exactly what they were himself.

As he now advanced into the shop, it struck Mistress Foretop that he did not come quite so well prepared as she had expected; since the consciousness of being about to *pay* a bill, generally gives a man a certain air of consequence, which makes him, for the time being at least, feel superior to the person he is to oblige. There was in the Captain, on the contrary, which Mistress Foretop in a moment detected, a certain shuffling air; a desire to evade the subject, and more civility in his manner than was usual with a gentleman of so much importance. Quite convinced by these signs, that no money was forthcoming, Mistress Foretop felt that *she* had now the right to play the dignified character, and might be as uncivil as she pleased without the fear of offending. To a very kind question, therefore, as to where her husband might be gone this morning, she an-

swered in a manner full of meaning—"Gone ! why in good sooth gone out, to attend some small matters of business in the way of his craft ; where, I trow, he is like to get paid for it ; and not to receive promises instead of pence, as some people do ; and who, may be, are like enough to get paid after the fashion your old general, Sir Richard Grenville, observed when he paid his dues to the Keeper of the Fleet."

"Why, how say you, did he pay, good woman ?" said the Captain, sulkily.

"How did he pay !" re-echoed Mistress Foretop : "why, marry, in the same way that, very likely, you intend to pay me if I let you — by giving leg bail, and showing a good pair of heels on the first opportunity. He ran clean away."

The Captain took his pipe out of his mouth, and smiled, as well as his black visage would admit of such an illumination, as he said in a tone of cajolery, "You do but jest, I see, this morning: for well do you know that my singular good affection to you and to your hus-

band would not suffer me, as a gentleman of honour, to show cutter's law in your house. Nay, cheer up, my good dame ! Hang me, if such a buxom face as thine was made for scolding, — it lacks vinegar ; and looks as handsome as the Queen's, when her Majesty is in her sweetest humour. Come, Dame, never flout for a matter of some twenty shillings, seeing that death and quarter day are the only two things certain in this world ; and my quarter day depends upon contingencies, and comes not always, I grant you, with the almanac : — but come, it must. Look up then, good Dame, and I swear by all that is most dear to honour — my reputation as a soldier — that I will pay thee as soon as my Irish remittances come in ; and give thee the cherry-coloured gown thou didst so much covet in old Abraham, the pedlar's, pack."

" Thy Irish remittances !" cried Mistress Foretop : " Good lack ! I never thought thou hadst any estate over seas."

" Oh ! yes," said the Captain, " all my estates are over seas ; and thence comes it, that in

consequence of these unruly times, with the uncertainty of winds and frequent loss of shipping, my supplies are not always so regular as my wants ; for a man must eat, drink, and sleep, you know, if the means to do so come to him or not."

" But not at an honest woman's cost, I trow," said Mistress Foretop, who, though somewhat smoothed by the Captain's manner, had still a longing eye after the payment of his bill ; " thou didst promise I should have my own on this very blessed morning, or I am no true woman."

" A true woman thou art, Mistress Foretop," said the Captain ; " for thou dost never lack wit ; though some, less just to thy merits, will say thou dost best prove thy womanhood by never lacking tongue. But a true woman thou art, and a fair woman, and a kind woman, and thou wilt lend me a crown this very blessed morning, till I can pay all in a lump, if it were only out of remembrance to my misfortunes ; knowing that my somewhat diminished means are the consequence of my sufferings in the

cause of the King of England, France, Scotland, and Ireland to boot."

"In the cause of the King of hearts, clubs, diamonds, and spades to boot, you mean," said Mistress Foretop, "till a spade will at last be handled for you; for a churchyard or a gallows will be the end of it, and of all such ways as you follow: for if you dice it, and card it, and racket it, and ruffle it, as I have heard tell you do, what will it all come to, but to bring down yourself to debt, beggary, and starving, and an early old age, and a quick going out, like a candle that is burnt at both ends, as I may say. There's no trusting to your word; and I'll have some better assurance for my security before I lend you another crown."

"Thou shalt, sweetheart," said the Captain, "and such assurance as cannot be doubted; for I will call in no security but thyself, and sign and seal on thy own red lips, that are more precious than rubies, and more sweet than sugar or sugared sack." And, so saying, the Captain very heartily saluted his landlady.

“ Well now, I declare,” said Mistress Foretop, wiping her mouth with her apron, and pulling straight her cap that was somewhat disordered by this kiss of peace, “ you are a strange man, and have such taking ways with you, that if my husband didn’t know he had the best of wives, it were enough to put tantrums into his head. But it’s the way with all you captains of troop-horse, when you get about us women ; there’s no being honest for you without one’s as old and as ugly as a witch.”

“ Then art thou the greatest of rogues,” said the Captain in a wheedling tone ; “ for if a good buxom presence, with a blithe eye and a merry song, be as rocks and shoals to make shipwreck of woman’s honesty, thou art lost, good dame, already, were it only for the sin of thy temptations. Thou wilt lend me a crown ? a crown for the sake of pity and of thy blue eye, that pity so becomes ; a crown for the sake of him who loves thee ; a crown to warm his heart, though in affliction, for a good cause ; a crown for the honour of England’s King, that a cup

may not be lacking to drink a health to our Charles?"

"I'll give a crown to supply such a cup with all my heart," said a voice; and looking round, the wheedling captain beheld Cornet Davy, who had that moment stepped into the shop.

"A fair offer should never be refused," said the captain: "honest friend, lend me the money, and we'll crush a cup together this morning with as light a heart as if we were kings."

"Nay, with a much lighter, I trust, than one king hath at least," said the Cornet with a sigh. "Take a crown: here it is, for I scorn to be worse than my word; though words are sometimes hastily set down, like random guesses at an account, but I must not stay to take shares now in the cup, for my business is very solemn and very pressing."

"I dare say it is," said the Captain, "something like my own this morning; the early part of the day being ever the best for settling accounts, or giving securities. But sit you down, honest friend, and I will order the

'prentice lad to run and bring us a cup of muscadine from the King's Head; that is, the King's Head that was; for, as I hear, the Round-heads have pulled down the sign and set up old Noll's in its place."

Cornet Davy shook his head at the hearing of so ill an omen. "I trust it may never go farther than a sign," he said: "but this disrespect to the royal image of his Majesty, that used to hang out as an invitation to gladden the hearts of his subjects within, is no good sign how the original may be treated if the worst comes of it to the royalists; for those who are so ready to pull down but the semblance of a king's head would not scruple to take off the head itself on the first opportunity."

Captain Coleman soon obtained the muscadine; as the Cornet made known his errand, and was informed he must wait till the barber surgeon, whose attendance was required, might be returned from his morning duties out of doors, Mistress Foretop, the Captain, and Davy sat down very lovingly together to partake of the cheering cup, seasoned by the remains of

a pasty that the liberality of the landlady had supplied as a morning repast for the company.

Politics (that favourite theme of the day, and of all Englishmen, for they are a thinking and therefore a political nation,) supplied a subject for discourse ; and though each party considered himself or herself as fully competent to guide the council of state, yet possibly our readers might hold their opinions in less estimation : we shall, therefore, pass in silence their discourse on these topics, and merely observe that Cornet Davy, on hearing the Captain's name, seemed suddenly to recollect him ; and said in a very grave tone of voice, " I believe, Captain, notwithstanding what I have this morning both seen and heard to make me think well of your loyalty, that I am mistaken. I rather suspect that you are one of those who, wishing to escape all pains and penalties for having borne arms for King Charles, took the covenant so soon as the parliament and Fairfax turned the balance in their own favour in the west."

" Worthy brother in arms," said the Captain, " you do me wrong, exceeding wrong ;

and, rather trusting to envious report, which ever slanders merit, than to the credit due to a gentleman of honour, you have swallowed greedily the first tale circulated to my disadvantage, and to the manifest injury of those principles of loyalty, for which I have suffered both in body, mind, and estate."

"You did not take the covenant then?" said Cornet Davy.

"You shall hear," replied Coleman. "After Fairfax beat us by numbers, nothing but by numbers—for you know there's no withstanding odds, though one be as valiant as Hercules—I was held in durance; and being considered a very dangerous and determined man, from my many acts of singular loyalty and valour—I claim no merit in them, valour being but my nature, not at all a thing of choice; for it is choice which constitutes the merit of any action—I was, as I may say, become, even in name, very terrible to the enemy; so that in order to confine the red dragon, for so I think the puritan rascals called me——"

"Very like," said the Cornet; "the red

dragon means the devil, and is talked of in Revelations. Grenville's troopers were often thought to merit the name."

"I say," continued the Captain, "that Fairfax and Waller became jealous of my fame, as well as of my principles; and so it was determined to send me on board the ships, or into Turkish slavery, unless I would take the covenant, which I, of course, most resolutely refused."

"And how came it, then, that you got off at last?" said the Cornet.

"Why, a certain friend of mine, who knew I was not to be wrought upon, but would die a martyr to the cause, happened to be one of the sequestrators or committee-men: so he came to me, under pretence, as it were, that we might sit together, and crush an honest cup, as a cheering to my captivity; and whilst we did so, he gave a paper into my hands, and bade me put it into my pocket, and take charge of it for him till his return, some sudden affair of business obliging him to leave me. I complied with his request without examining the paper.

In the mean while he went to the proper authorities, and having solemnly attested he had seen me take the covenant, I was presently discharged, and never suspected the trick till liberty was my own. I own to you that then I thought virtue did not require me to step forward and contradict the good effects of so friendly an artifice; not doubting that the day would come when I should be sought for by some of our old cavaliers, in the same way that seamen look for the polar star to guide them in safety through perils."

Scarcely had the Captain finished this account of his taking the covenant, which, true or false, was his usual apology with royalists for having taken it at all, when a new comer, of a very different order, arrived; and Mistress Foretop hastened to greet her new guest, who was one of her own sex, with much kindness, bidding her a hearty welcome, and calling her by the name of Widow Raleigh.

CHAP. XIII.

But still his tongue ran on, the less
Of weight it bore, with greater ease ;
And with its everlasting clack
Set all men's ears upon the rack.

BUTLER'S *Hudibras*.

THE Widow Raleigh was in her appearance a most interesting woman. She was not young, being more than forty years old ; and though she had never, probably, possessed much beauty, still there was that expression of sense, of benevolence, of quiet and subdued feeling about her countenance, which created respect as well as good will in all worthy people who beheld her. She was attired in widow's weeds, neatly put on ; with a cap so white, that in contrast with the more gay but less nice attire of Mistress Foretop it looked liked driven snow. Yet with all her attention to propriety, it was evident by the threadbare state of her clothes, and a certain pale, lean look, with a hollowness

about the eyes (sure indications of necessity), that the Widow Raleigh was very poor. She apologised to Mistress Foretop for calling in to rest herself, as she complained of being fatigued, and of having to walk home as far as Tamerton by herself, unless she should be so fortunate as to meet some neighbour returning from market, who would give her a lift behind him on his horse.

“ And that’s what I hope you may, with all my heart,” replied Mistress Foretop ; “ for it’s no safe thing for a lone woman, and a gentlewoman, too, like you, Mistress Raleigh, to be going about the country by yourself in these times : and I have heard tell, you were to be sure to come this morning into Plymouth, to receive forty shillings so long owing to you from James Gray the hellier, owing even in your late husband, honest gentleman’s time, as I may say ; and so I hope you’ve got the money.”

Mistress Raleigh, though less communicative than Mistress Foretop, had no apprehension in

answering the question, and therefore allowed she had received it.

“ Well, now,” exclaimed the barber’s wife, “ that is as it should be : promise and pay is all fair play, and that’s giving a smooth word and keeping it ; for call me cousin but cozen me not, as the proverb goes, is what I like well, and not such palavering and giving of promises, as if, like pie-crust, they were only made to be broken.” Here Mistress Foretop gave a side glance at the Captain ; but he was one of those who never understood a hint, unless it suited his convenience so to do. Replenishing, therefore, his pipe from a huge box which he carried about him, that was as full of tobacco as a modern dandy’s would be of snuff, he whiffed on, nothing abashed by these petty sallies of irritability, in consequence of his failure in paying his bill.

Now whether he was struck with compassion by observing the melancholy countenance and the helpless condition of Mistress Raleigh, or whether he had an “ itching palm ” to appropriate to himself any part of the forty shillings

just mentioned, we cannot say; but certain it is, that a very gallant project at this moment entered his head, which he thus hastened to communicate:—

“I have been thinking, Master Davy,” he said, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and turning round to the Cornet, “that it would be a pity this honest gentlewoman should, at the risk of much bodily fatigue, and probable loss of her charge, have to walk home all the way to Tamerton. I have heard that Sir Hugh Piper keeps an old, but stout, troop-horse, that he rode whilst under command of Sir Bevil Grenville, at Landsdown fight. The horse is called Hector, I believe. Now would Sir Hugh lend him for such a purpose, we could speedily equip the old charger with a saddle and pillion, and I would gladly take the gentlewoman home, and return safely with the horse before the moon is up to night; and as for thieves, footpads, discarded soldiers, liberated prisoners, highwaymen, or cut-purses, let them come — one and all — the widow is under my guard, and she shall see how we captains of horse

send such fellows. Why I would cut them up by dozens, as you, Mistress Foretop, would cut up minced pies."

"Now as I am a true woman," said Mistress Foretop, "that's a very civil and officer-like proposal of the Captain's; and I counsel you, Mistress Raleigh, never to refuse a good offer, for it mayn't come a second time; and it's not safe for you to go home alone with that money about you, for even hedges have eyes, as the saying is, and walls have ears, where such things are at hand."

The Widow Raleigh, far from rejoicing at the proposal of the gallant captain, seemed a good deal embarrassed by it, yet thanked him civilly; but after many efforts, and some hesitation, as if not knowing what to say, she assured Mistress Foretop she did not doubt doing very well, as she knew many of the farmers who would very likely be returning home, and would gladly give her assistance.

"No, no, don't you trust to that," said Mistress Foretop, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; and to be sure, Mis-

ness Raleigh, for a gentlewoman like you, who knows reading, and writing, and breeding, and needlework, and all those sort of things, and a clergyman's widow into the bargain, where could you find a more proper man to see you home than a handsome captain of troop-horse? That is, a captain that was, but once a captain always a captain, is, you know, captain's law all over the world. And I don't doubt but that you'll trot along as comfortably together as if you'd known each other these seven years. And though I say it before his face, as I would stand his back, you'll find the Captain a very pleasant man; that is, when he is sober, as he is now; for he's apt to be a little rash and *phlegmatic* (probably meaning *splomatic*) when he's taken a cup or so too much. And who knows what may come of it?" added Mistress Foretop with a giggle: "for they say women are witching things, and as your first husband wore a black coat, I dare say you'd have no objection to your second wearing a red one, he, he, he!"

This sort of jesting did not seem to be at

all relished by poor Mistress Raleigh; who, anxious to turn the conversation, and yet not to give offence where real kindness might be intended, however vulgarly or coarsely expressed, said, “she was much obliged, but she could not think of taking Sir Hugh Piper’s horse for her service, without going to ask his leave, and she could not be so bold as to do that.”

Cornet Davy heard this; and as the good man knew nothing of that refined practice of gentlemen and ladies, in expressing a negative by excuses only, he took the widow’s objections in their most literal sense. Unwilling, therefore, to pain Mistress Raleigh, he thought to do her a service by saying, “Honoured madam, I can save you that trouble; for my worthy master’s old horse, Hector, is at all times at my command; and if I neglected such an opportunity as this offers, to use the beast for the help of the widow, and, as I may say, of the fatherless also (for I think I have heard you have a pretty little puppet of a girl), why, I repeat, my master would never

forgive me ; since he says it is always one part of my duty, as his managing clerk, not to let any thing stand still : I must not, therefore, let his horse stand still, when there is reason good to put him in motion. I'm going home, to Dame Sibella's, on a message, the moment after I've seen Master Barber ; for my master, Sir Hugh, stays to-day at Mount Edgcumbe. And I'll bring down the horse for you as soon as the boy gets him in from the field."

Exceedingly vexed at this arrangement, the Widow Raleigh was going to put forth her plain and positive denial, when a circumstance arose which induced her to alter her mind.

At this moment a person entered the shop, to enquire if " Master Barber might yet be returned home," who was, both in appearance and character, very different from any of the other gossips now assembled. This new comer was a little, pale-faced, meagre mechanic, a leather-cutter and glove-maker by trade. He had a small pair of sharp, piercing eyes ; wore a suit of coarse drab and an apron ; had his hair close cut, with an old black cap on the crown of his

head, and affected that stiff, solemn, lack-a-daisical air so much in fashion with the godly.

Tim Glover, for such was his name, expressed himself in no haste to take his immediate departure, as he wanted to see the barber, and did not, therefore, altogether refuse Mistress Foretop's invitation that he would sit down and sip a cup of small beer, which she had set upon the table, as a humble companion to the more costly muscadine; for she well remembered that she was cautioned to be civil to every body by her husband; and though her tongue would sometimes go beyond bounds in the emotions excited by her loyalty, yet she could, on most occasions, keep on pretty smooth terms even with her political adversaries.

Scarcely had Tim Glover dropt into his chair, when the Captain, who, being tall himself, held all little people in contempt, (and unfortunately for little people, they can seldom possess much dignity, so entirely does dignity depend on magnitude of body as well as of mind,) turned about, and said, with an insolent air, "What news, my great man of little compass? What news may be stirring this morn-

ing? You look as if you had found out it is wit to steal a horse, or pick a lock, but it is wisdom to let it alone. What news? How wags the world? Are the godly turned honest, or are halters become dear, that so many of them go abroad unhanged? And where is your Mars of the day, General Cromwell?"

"Working wonders in the land of Ham," replied the little glover.

"In the land of beef and pudding, you mean," said the Captain: "why, what sort of a land would your psalm-singing generals make of Old England? where, to the amusement of all our neighbours, you would set up even an army of troopers, call a muster-roll, or regulate a drill, as if, forsooth, all things were to be done after the fashion of wanderers in the land of Egypt! I marvel where this will end, and when a gentleman may hope again to get into commission."

"There's good opportunity," replied the little man, "both for gentle and simple, who are well disposed; for, as I hear, the trained bands are to be called out again to do the Lord's

service, and the *possee committees* for the safety of the nation."

"The *posse comitatus*, you mean," said the Captain; "for your posse of committees are, as far as the good they do may be in question, beings of a very doubtful nature; like a griffin or a dragon are they, only that most men feel for certain that they have claws: for what with fine, tax, or writ of warrant, there is no man's bag from which they do not take toll, like the miller for his dish."

"But there are those abroad," said Tim Glover, "who will levy toll more than they do. Sons of Belial they are, who have fled to the wilderness from the face of wrath; and there have set up their abominable altars, to build anew the old Babel, becoming as the open enemy to all men, and very terrible to the virgins of Shiloh, who are afraid for their life to pass in their way."

"Who the devil do you mean?" said the Captain; and he added, with a fiercer oath than we choose to repeat, "I don't understand jesting; who do you mean?"

“The Gubbins’s are out again,” said Tim Glover, “and have drove and stolen six cows, ten sheep, and a dozen or two hens, from the largest farm near Tamerton, last night ; for, ’tis said, the Gubbins’s it must be who did this, sure enough, and no other bodies.”

“The Gubbins’s !” exclaimed Mistress Foretop ; “then ’tis well, Mistress Raleigh, that you’ve got so valorous a man as the Captain to see you home, or, my life for it, you’d leave both your head and your purse by the wayside.”

“And who are the Gubbins’s ?” enquired Mistress Raleigh : “I have heard something of them, but more in generals than in particulars.”

“There’s no generals among them, Widow Raleigh, I do assure you,” answered Mistress Foretop ; “but a vile, rascally captain as leads them on ; one that they call Roger Rowle ; and his men are a set of ragamuffin blackguards, as bad as ever cried ‘Stand’ on the King’s highway.”

“A set of papists and outlawed thieves and

murderers," said Tim Glover, "who defied both King and Parliament, and would have Baal's priests and none other for their rulers."

"A very Scythian race of savages," said the Captain. "The leaders among them, my old commander, Sir Richard Grenville, once caught and laid in limbo in Lydford Castle for being papists and suspected persons; and for the good of the country, and in order to preserve the peace, he kept the chief of them for a couple of years chained in a dungeon without light. But the fellow was a very Goliath — him they call Roger Rowle I mean — and so he broke loose, headed his savages, received all comers, (fugitives from law, Cavaliers, or Roundheads, no matter which,) and lived as great a man among them, in his own way, as if he were King of England; stops passengers, imprisons them, drives cattle, steals sheep, commits robbery, theft, and, some say, murder; and yet snaps his fingers at the law, defies all pursuit, and lets his pursuers trace nothing but his foot-prints, and those not so far as his den."

"Sir," said Mistress Raleigh, on hearing this

account, "I will thankfully accept your offer to carry me home on the horse this worthy person is so willing to lend me; for I have a poor fatherless girl, and if any thing happened to me——"

"Widow," cried the Captain, interrupting her, "I am at your service; and if Roger Rowle himself should think fit to attack us whilst this pretty bit of steel hangs by my side, body and soul of me, but you shall go snacks; we will halve the rogue's head between us, and a hundred gold nobles are set as a price upon it."

Whilst the Captain pronounced these words, a sudden burst into the shop, and a good deal of bustle, announced the return of the master of the house. Trim Foretop was in the very ecstasy of occupation, having so much to do, he did not know what to do first. Add to which, he came in laden with news—such a budget of news, he longed to tell it; yet what with hearing the errand on which Cornet Davy came, the story of the Gubbins's being out again, attending to a new customer who wanted something for a

sick child (for Trim dabbled a little in physic), and though last not least, the din of his wife's tongue, which rung in his ears like the hand bell of a town crier; verily, with all these things together, Trim scarcely knew what he was about, nor in what manner to slip in his own piece of intelligence, and he was bursting with the desire to communicate it.

At length he ran on, when he could begin to talk, in something of the following manner: —
“Certainly, Master Davy, I'll attend you directly — Sir Hugh Piper, that is, I mean, Sir Piers Edgcumbe's order: a most worthy gentleman, there cannot be a better: — pity he wasn't taken up and hanged; as great a thief as ever stretched hemp is that Roger Rowle you are telling about. I know it, my dear Mistress Foretop, you want to speak to me, but you see I'm in haste: a case of necessity, for necessity has no law, as the proverb goes. Shipwrecked you said, Cornet Davy, there cannot be a worse; yes, letting blood for fever, and a broken head — you're come to the right barber-surgeon to mend it. A broken head's

no uncommon thing in the way of practice now-a-days; when every body fights for the sake of peace, liberty of conscience, or the old laws, new making by the Commons of England as fast as they can. But it's all very right, all very right, and a great help to trade: for the civil wars have been the making of barber-surgeons and otherwise; likewise of gaol-keepers, lawyers, and gentlemen of the committees. What, Captain, going to see Mistress Raleigh home! on the back of an old troop-horse! Ha, ha, well, well, better she be made to ride that way than riding to water; but Mistress Raleigh need not fear the latter, since it is reserved for a scold.* I'm coming, I'm coming, in the prick of a lancet, or the flourish of a razor. Can't stay to shave you, Master Glover; can't, upon my veracity; my wife will do it for you quite as well; for she can cut close, Master Glover; sharp and close as any razor when

* Riding to water, a custom practised within the memory of some now living in Devonshire, was the same thing as riding the *skimmington*, noticed in *Hudibras*.

she uses her tongue: and yet — oh, yes, I know it, my dear Mistress Foretop; I understand what you would say; you're as sweet as a May morning when you are pleased and in good humour. And now you're all satisfied, hear my news!"

The Cornet showed signs of impatience.

"You can't stay for it? Oh, yes, you can; for I must just look out some necessary things to take with me to Mount Edgcumbe. Just a small matter of confection of *amber*, some *rosa solis*, and a little *aurum potabile*; and my best lancet, and my sharpest razor; for as you say that the shipwrecked man is dangerously hurt, very like I may want both — my lancet to breathe a vein in him, if he lives; or my razor for shaving the corpse, if he be dead: that's what I call doing business; always being ready for occasion and any possible opportunity. That's the way half the great men rise in the world; for none but General Cromwell can hope to get on by a self-denying ordinance; ha, ha, ha; excuse my wit; but a good joke is

half my stock in trade — always keeps customers pleasant, and in good humour — and now for my news !”

“ Let it be brief, I beg of you,” said the Cornet: “ give us the sum total without the items, else will Sir Hugh think I delay. I pray, be brief.”

“ Ay, brief as a sentence of Sir Richard Grenville’s,” replied the barber, “ who used to say to a prisoner, ‘ Go hang,’ and it was done at once, and then he took note for the trial; whence comes the saying of Lydford law. — You’ve heard Master Browne, the Devonshire poet’s lines about the Gubbins’s and Lydford law, I dare say, Master Cornet? else could I repeat them to you. But let me see, now for my news; and first of all I must sharpen this razor, and tell you the whole story about Browne the poet, and Lydford law, as I do it.”

There never was barber since the days of the noted chattering barber in the story of little Hunchback so tormenting as this was: for, whereas the Arabian barber took out his astro-

labe to see what it was o'clock, and both sung the song, and danced the dance of Zantout, when he should have been shaving an impatient lover, even so did our barber take out no astrolabe (when he should have been waiting on Cornet Davy), but some half dozen of razors more than necessary, and would sharpen them, and spend his time in useless bustle and preparation; and would tell (with all its windings and digressions) the story about the wild race of the Gubbins's, the origin of the saying of Lydford law, and, finally, reverted to telling his own news, whilst the old Cornet sat upon thorns to get him off to do his errand at Mount Edgcumbe.

“ I'm going, I'm going directly,” said the barber. “ I have only one thing more to tell, and that shall be in five words — we shall have the devil to pay next Sunday.”

Tim Glover groaned. “ Pay not Satan's hire on the seventh day,” he said, “ or the ground will open and swallow you up alive; for if to pick sticks on the Sabbath was a sin worthy

death under the old law, what must he incur who pays devil's wages on that self-same day under the new law?"

"Why for the matter of that," cried the Captain, "I am so far a theologian as to say that to give the devil his due at any time is fair play and good doctrine. But come Trim, thy news; and as the king says to the stage player in Hamlet, leave thy damnable faces and begin."

"I will," said Trim, "I will. Know all men — for such are the very words, I saw it in a printed bill with my own eyes — know all men that our Sovereign Lord the King, Charles, of blessed memory — no, that wasn't it, for King Charles is still alive in this world — may he be so for ever."

"What! like the wandering Jew?" said the Captain.

"No, no, not that, don't put me out," said Trim, — "that our Sovereign Lord the King, as well as his late father, of blessed memory — ay, there I'm right — his late father, of blessed

memory — published a declaration authorising lawful sports and pastimes on the Sabbath day, the same being much opposed and discountenanced altogether, and forbidden by the parliament. Sundry knights, gentlemen, yeomen, freemen, and others of this county are determined, for the good of their bodies as well as of their souls, and to maintain the ancient, manly sports, exercises, and pastimes of this kingdom, to revive the same ; and, for such purpose, on Sunday next, at Tamerton Foliot, it is the intention of all such as shall be well, merrily, and peaceably disposed to come armed with bats, clubs, sticks, bludgeons, and what not, to keep in all its ancient honours, rights, and usages REVEL SUNDAY, to wrestle, frolic, pitch the bar, play nine men's morrice, shittlecock, and draw a good bow, such as can ; and to dance and wrestle, sing and drink a cup of brown ale, as Englishmen ought to do, in spite of all the Cromwells and Iretons, and all the preachers and parliaments that have, may, can, or shall attempt to oppose them — and, I say,

the day ends to my profit, and I must be stirring, for broken heads will roll about as plenty as nine pins."

Tim Glover groaned and turned up his eyes.

"Well, I declare I'll go," said Mistress Foretop; "for I like to see a little pleasure, now and then, in a decent way."

"And if there is like to be danger I must be there; or Bellona would not know her own field," said the Captain. "Mistress Foretop, I'm at your service for the day."

"'T is thought," said Trim, "that Ruthen's troopers will attempt to stop the revel; but there's the King's command to bear them out in the lawfulness of the sports, and as long as England *has* a king I have heard that is good law."

"His kingdom is past away," said Tim Glover, "for he is in bondage, and his crown is like to be given over as a spoil."

"Is it?" said Mistress Foretop, reddening with fury: "then I say, and I don't care who hears me, that I hope to live to see the day he may have his own again, and be seen walking in

Windsor Castle with a lion on one side of him, and a unicorn on the other, as a great king of England ought to do in his own palace, and among his own people."

And so saying, with an air of great dignity Mistress Foretop flounced out of the shop to attend to some household duty, and the Cornet promising to send the horse for Mistress Raleigh set off for Dame Sibella's as Trim did for Mount Edgcumbe.

CHAP. XIV.

And after all came life, and lastly death —
Death with most grim and griesley visage seen ;
Yet he is nought but parting of the breath,
He ought to see, but like a shade to weene,
Unbodied, unsoul'd, unheard, unseen.

SPENSER'S *Faery Queene*.

THE death of Grace-on-High Gabriel, which took place soon after Cornet Davy had set out in quest of Trim Foretop to bleed the sick man, changed the nature of the honest barber's visit to Mount Edgcumbe ; who, instead of letting blood on a living subject, now shaved a dead one, received the customary fee, and having drunk what was called a "dole cup" of excellent waters, returned home, well satisfied with his labours and their reward. Trim, having thus performed his duty to the defunct, left the ground free for the more active agency of the women, who were at all times the privileged attendants of the dead.

Whilst these things were going forward, young Radcliffe made all necessary preparation for quitting the house that had given him such timely shelter in the hour of distress. And having requested the steward of Sir Piers to give orders respecting the funeral of his late servant — which was to take place on the third day after his death — Radcliffe fixed his own departure for the following morning. He determined to go at once to Warleigh; for even if no other motive existed to lead him thither, he fancied Gabriel's death obliged him to return; since that unfortunate man having lived for more than twenty years with Radcliffe's godfather and guardian, Sir John Copplestone, and having, he believed, no other friend or connection in the world, it was right Sir John should know what had passed. These arrangements being made, we must leave him for awhile, whilst we return to the chamber of death.

It was towards the evening of the day on which Gabriel died that Dame Gee, whose vocation led her much to scenes of gloom and

awe, was busied about the body; aided by Nanny Raffles, the old woman we noticed in a former chapter, as acting the part of an inferior nurse under the high rule of the dame. This great mistress of arts, (both visible and invisible, useful and terrific,) with her assistant, at the time we open this chapter, were, according to the customs of Devon (to this day not entirely extinct), occupied in what was called "*dressing the clay*"—that is, decking the corpse; which was laid out on the bed with various flowers, rosemary, &c. The following conversation took place between the two women:—

"Nanny," said Dame Gee, "this is watching night; has the housekeeper sent up the stoup of juniper waters and the horn spoon?"

"The juniper and the horn spoon are both here," replied the old crone; "but sure you'll not be so bold as to stir the powdered elder leaves with it, till the dogs begin to howl, and the dead man is done dressing? It's no good charm, dame, I take it, without you mind such signs; and if you miss one of them,

the brownny* will come up, and scat you with your own stick though it be of shrew ash, for a half-done charm is the death of him : it will let him have no peace, and gives him as great pains as he does us when we offend him, and he sends us the rheumatics."

"The brownny, you old fool!" replied Dame Gee in a very unceremonious manner; "what talk you of the brownny! he fears me more than I do him; for if he fails me at a pinch, I can split an elm tree, and wedge him in, as closely as they do, in the north of Devon, a field mouse that has run over a sheep's back, and made the animal paralytic. Give me those bundles of rosemary, and the ivy twigs, and the bay."

Old Nanny Raffles obeyed; and as Dame Gee continued her death service of decoration, her companion observed, "Well now, I declare that's well done. There's nobody be-

* The brownny is a western spirit as well as a Scotch one. Borlase says, that in Cornwall, *even in his day*, the country people invoked the assistance of the brownny at the swarming of bees.

tween this and Brent-tor that can stretch and dress a body like you. He looks as pretty a corpse as Tom Nightshade ; young Nightshade's old father, that you dressed, dame, after he was hanged, and as I have heard tell, you lopt off his right hand to make a hand of glory of it."

"Hush," said Dame Gee, "let not the walls hear of that matter. The Gubbins's have the hand now, and a fine hand for them it is. It was dried in the dog days, and it's a candlestick fit to hold a light to the fiend himself, did he need any other than the fire that glimmers forth from his own horns."

"That hand of glory is a fearful thing, as I have heard tell," said Nanny Raffles, her old, grey, and envious eyes twinkling with pleasure as she looked on Dame Gee, whose powers she beheld with emulous admiration. "I would give a crown, if a crown I had to give, to know what it's good for ; what's its worth."

"The hand of glory," replied Dame Gee, "is potent as the touch of the ungraved dead. Its worth is to those who are night-breakers of

strong doors and rich men's houses. For if a candle be placed in it, made with charmed things, when lighted and suddenly held out, all who behold that hand and that flame shall straight submit themselves in silence to the bold man who bears before him such a torch ; they shall become stupid, motionless, dull, void of all spirit ; the blood in their bodies shall be turned to ice, and their vital functions become heavier than lead. Now to our business. Have you locked up all the cats in the house, and covered all the looking-glasses ?”

“ The maidens have done it,” replied Nanny ; “ for not one of them would stay in the house with a dead man in it, unless they had been minded to keep off the devils that long both for the soul and body of the departed. As I came up here just now, before you did, I found the old gamekeeper and his wife making a moan for the dead as loud as that of Rizpah, when she was watching the bodies of the slain, as worthy Master Hezekiah Hornbuckle said at the Sabbath preaching.” Nanny pronounced these last words with a sigh ; for amongst the other quali-

ties of this gossip was that of an inclination to attend the holding-forths of the various sectaries of the time : she had a good memory, and, though so old, could repeat, chapter and verse, after the minister : it was shrewdly thought she would have become a zealous religionist, only that in order to be such, possibly she might be required to leave off some of those very sins she had "most a mind to," namely, the sins of witchcraft and devilry, in the cultivation of which she seemed to be in a fair way under the auspices of Dame Gee.

"And what did the gamekeeper lament for?" enquired the priestess of the ceremonies.

"He lamented," said Nanny, "that the parliament had put down the soul-bell, as a popish and super-righteous thing ; for, said the gamekeeper to me, it is a hard case for a dying sinner, since every body knows the devil can't abide bells, and the sound of the soul-bell kept him off : so the spirit, being let out first, was sure to gain the start, and got by it what sportsmen call law ; but now the parliament have put it down by acclamation."

“Proclamation, you mean, you poor ignorant body,” said Dame Gee.

“Well, acclamation or proclamation, it’s all one and the same thing in these days. But now, said the gamekeeper to me,” continued Nanny,—“now that they have put down the soul-bell, I have read in a book, that a man has no more chance than a hare with the dogs at her throat; for the devil will stand at the bed’s head ready to catch a sinner’s spirit the moment he gets loose.”

“Leave thy prating about the soul-bell,” said Dame Gee, “and light the candles that I have placed on yonder table, that all things may be done decently before the housekeeper comes up; for this night does she come to be touched under my directions.”

“Good lack!” exclaimed Nanny Raffles, “for what ill? Hath she a wart, or a tumour, or a wen?”

“She hath some swelling in the throat,” said Dame Gee; “but a dead man’s hand will cure it, when properly touched under my special directions, or I know no leech-craft. And

now light yonder tapers at the end of the room."

"There are seven of them," said Nanny, "an odd number, and a lucky one. For, as the minister said, 'there is much in numbers.' The seventh day was for rest after making the world: and then there were seven altars built by Balaam, and seven oxen, and seven rams were sacrificed upon them; and seven times about the walls of Jericho seven trumpets were blown. And there were seven golden candlesticks, and seven churches in Asia, and ——"

"Seven devils are in thee, woman," said Dame Gee in an angry voice, "that thou standest there preaching instead of doing my bidding. Stay a moment, however; one thing I had forgot. Do not light the candles yet, but come hither, and help me to tie down his thumbs."

The two women now proceeded to perform a rite, which we have heard was practised in some remote parts of the west of England even so recently as during the last century.

This was to fold the thumbs of the dead man within the hand ; a superstitious rite, supposed to have originated with the Jews ; as the thumb, in this position, resembles a character in the Hebrew alphabet, that was anciently used to signify the name of the Almighty ; and the thumb, when bearing this similitude, was held to be capable of keeping aloof the power wicked spirits were at all times so determined to exercise over the dead.

Having accomplished this purpose, Dame Gee said to her assistant, “ Now give me the salt, and the dead man’s candle.”

Old Nanny Raffles immediately brought forward a pewter plate, upon which was piled a heap of salt and a candle. Dame Gee placed the plate upon that side the breast of the deceased containing the heart, and the candle close to his head. It threw upon the latter a strong light, and showed distinctly all the ghastliness of death. The bandage was still round his brows, as it had been left by the surgeon after dressing the wounds that occasioned his decease.

Old Nanny gazed upon him. “Now I look on his face by this light,” she said, “he reminds me, with that bloody head of his, broken as it is by the hard rocks that knocked the spirit out of him,—I say he reminds me of a corpse that I dressed some twenty years ago, when Sir Walter Radcliffe came so strangely by his death. I remember the night when I was sent for by the housekeeper at Warleigh to come up, with as little noise as might be, to stretch a dead man, and make him decent for the pit; and I went, and there was a clutter of business in the house: and I had just made him nice with flowers and rosemary, and had put the pewter dish with the salt on Sir Walter’s heart, and a fine corpse he was to see, when old Sir John Copplestone came in; but he was not old then, and he looked ——”

“And how did he look?” said Dame Gee, for the old crone made a pause in her tale.

“Looked!” exclaimed Nanny Raffles, “like the dead man’s shroud; and so I told him. ‘Do I,’ said Sir John? ‘why ’tis like enough, for Sir Walter was my friend, and took his hurt

in my cause. I wish to know what wounds he has upon him, for to-morrow he will be crowned.'—'Wounds!' quoth I, 'why, wounds that will cry out, and tell ugly tales at the judgment day. He has wounds enough upon him for one man's death, and maybe for two, if all comes to light.' With that Sir John Copplestone sighed, and took up a sprig of rosemary, as if he didn't know what he was about; and then he questioned me somewhat, but I didn't hear it plainly, and when I asked him what he said, he made answer with another question,— 'What's that salt for; what are you doing with it?'—'Lord, Sir John,' says I, 'don't you know it's the soul salt, that every one puts on a Christian body, to show that he did not die like the beasts that perish, but has a spirit to be saved as well as to be damned;' and with the hearing of that, Sir John Copplestone fetched another sigh, very like a groan. So I, seeing his grief, said, to cheer him up amain, 'Never fret for the dead, Sir, for the dead won't fret for you; and glad should you be to see Sir Walter thus, for there was a hard parting between the

body and the spirit; though I, who sat up with him the night afore he died, drew away the pillows from under his head; for I knew if there should happen to be pigeons' feathers in them he would die in strong agonies; and so he did, for all my care: and long before his hour came, well did I know which way he was going; for as I sat up all night, I heard how hard he breathed, and, as if the death-watch told time to it, it ticked as loud all night as if it had been a mortal dial, agoing and agoing with never a stop. And some do say that old Molly the cook saw his fetch, and that a bay tree in the garden suddenly withered: it was one he had planted when a boy. And as I was a nursing and a watching, as I might be now, there came three distinct raps at the bed's head, so we all knew there was a summons.'"

Whilst Nanny spoke, a clear, solemn, and loud rap made her start up: "Lord have mercy upon us!" she exclaimed, "What is that?"

"What is that, you old fool!" said Dame Gee; "why go and open the door, and see; I will be sworn it is the housekeeper come to be

touched ; but she is come before her time ; we can do nothing till the moon is up and full, and shining as bright as silver. Open the door, I say.”

Nanny, somewhat recovered from the startling effects lately produced on her nerves by a rap so *mal-à-propos*, or rather so truly *à-propos* to the subject in debate, went and opened the door as she was ordered ; and in doing so forgot to conclude the story she had commenced about watching the body of Sir Walter Radcliffe, who had come so fearfully by his death nearly twenty years before.

CHAP. XV.

These midnight hags,
By force of potent spells, of bloody characters,
And conjurations, horrible to hear,
Call fiends and spectres from the yawning deep,
And set the ministers of hell at work.

Rowe's *Jane Shore*.

It was the housekeeper who now ventured to enter the dismal chamber of death. She felt some reluctance to join in the unhallowed rites to be performed; and much feared, in her own mind, Sir Piers would not quite approve the method of cure she was about to try for her disease. Sir Piers had recommended to her another mode of treatment far more simple, and far less injurious both to body and soul; namely, that she should hang three spiders about her neck, and take a certain elixir three mornings fasting; a mode of cure highly approved by Sir Piers for all glandular swellings, and one set down in his diary by the famous Sir Wil-

liam Ashmole, as having been tried on himself for an ague with the happiest effects.

Now the housekeeper, who considered her master's knowledge, and that of Sir William Ashmole's into the bargain, as nothing at all in comparison with the profound skill of Dame Gee, determined to take her own course, though in a quiet way; and so, notwithstanding she kept three ready bottled spiders (the finest and the fattest the housemaids could sweep down from their snug birth amongst the old hangings at Mount Edgcumbe) in order that she might apply them as so many pendant amulets, should occasion, or rather her master, absolutely require its being done, yet she now had stolen up, full of terror and full of faith, to be touched by the dead man as a certain mode of cure under the auspices of the mistress of charms, spells, and all manner of witchcrafts.

Nothing, however, was to be done till the moon was quite risen and shining in the heavens. But Dame Gee recommended her to sit still, and not to be running about the house at that hour of the evening. So down they all

sat together by the embers of a very small fire; for they would not keep a large one on account of the corpse: and the housekeeper thinking a cup of strong waters would be absolutely necessary to raise the spirits of all parties on such an occasion, she produced from her capacious pocket a little, long-necked, basket-bound bottle, filled up three small drinking horns, and turning her back towards that part of the chamber where stood the bed, that she might not see the body, sipped her liquor in a modest way, for she was temperate even in the midst of her terrors, and waited patiently the expected hour.

The other two, who had each a professional love of death-beds and charnel-houses, were far less nice in their feelings and stronger in their nerves; and they now solaced themselves from the wicker-worked bottle, not at all discommoded, though the dead man, as it were, was staring them full in the face; and, maybe, they would not have relinquished the cup, even had he started up to take shares with them. The awe of funeral decorations did not so far affect

their spirits as to tie up their tongues, though it naturally suggested a theme for discourse; and all the various modes of stretching, and dressing, and making handsome the dead, as old Nanny called it, was entered upon, or discussed with the utmost critical nicety such topics would admit. At last it became a question whether a person who died of a gunshot or of a sword wound made the prettiest corpse. Dame Gee contended for the former, Nanny Raffles for the latter, and at last old Nanny appealed to the housekeeper to settle the debate, by asking her if she remembered the body that lay at Plymouth Castle whilst Sir Piers Edgumbe was held prisoner there, and what a handsome one it was.

The housekeeper shook her head, and said, with a sigh, "I never think of that time without its bringing to my mind one who was a great sufferer, and who I heard of but this morning; for Trim Foretop told me, the Widow Raleigh had set up her rest at last in a poor mean cottage at Tamerton Foliot."

"The Widow Raleigh!" said Dame Gee: "I

have heard something about her; but I scarce know who she is; yet I think I saw her once, and told her more than she wished to hear. Was she not the wife of one of the King's chaplains?"

"Ah, truly," said the housekeeper: "he was Doctor Raleigh, the nephew of the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, who lost his head to please the Spaniards, as every body said, in the time of King James."

"The more fool he," said old Nanny, "to lose his head to please any body but his-self."

"He couldn't help it," replied the housekeeper; "for in those days, the same as they do in ours, they never ask a man whether he's pleased or no before they take off his head. But it's away with him! Tower-Hill, and a sharp axe, and off it goes: and I often sit and think, when I hear of these things, how much easier it is to take off a head than it is to put it on again. Heigho! it's a wisht thing, after all, to be bloody-minded, as poor Mistress Raleigh did witness, and none more so."

"I wish you would tell us the story about

Mistress Raleigh," said Dame Gee; "for though I know well enough what was the end of it, yet I never heard all the particulars."

"I'll tell them to you with all my heart," replied the housekeeper, "for I like to make myself pleasant among friends. Doctor Raleigh married a gentlewoman born and bred, Widow Raleigh, that now is, and that nobody takes count of. Well, you must know, he stood up for the King, as good cause he had, for King Charles had been a bountiful master to him; and when the rebellion broke out, he was sequestered and hurried from prison to prison, suffering all manner of barbarities. At length he escaped and went to attend upon his royal master at Oxford. During this time poor Mistress Raleigh was turned out of house and home, till she was so distressed that for two nights she lay in the open fields, and none durst take her in, for it was a parliament and a hanging matter to deal with her; though it had been only for the good of one's own soul out of charity."

"But how did Doctor Raleigh get into

trouble again after his escape to Oxford?" enquired Dame Gee.

"You shall hear," said the housekeeper; "his great friend was Sir Marmaduke Elford, who heard of poor Mistress Raleigh's terrible distress; and her husband having been put in a prison where there was the plague, had suffered so much before his escape, that he was too weak to go in search of her himself. Sir Marmaduke, therefore, kindly did it for him, and, as I have heard, at the risk of his own life he preserved Mistress Raleigh and her infant girl; who, but for him, must have perished on the open moors: but he searched day and night, till he found and saved her. Sir Marmaduke took her home with her poor baby, and treated both as if they had been his own flesh and blood. The good doctor soon after joined his wife and child, for the King's forces getting the day in the west, enabled him once more to go back to his living; but it did not last long, for my Lord Goring being defeated, and as many thought by his own fault, for he

was a very swearing, wicked man, the rebels again got the upper hand."

"I remember Lord Goring very well," said Nanny Raffles, "as well as I do Sir Richard Grenville, for they had both red noses, and would sit and sot over a drum-head when they had no other table."

"Ay, that they would," said the housekeeper: "they ruined the King's affairs in the west; and though I don't like to use ill words, yet I say the devil take both of them."

"I dare say he will in time," said Dame Gee, "for he never loses his own: but go on."

"Doctor Raleigh was with his wife," continued the housekeeper, "when he found himself obliged once more to fly for his life. He sheltered himself in Bridgewater, where he did his duty manfully for the King. He was taken prisoner when the town yielded, and then came sorrow indeed! Confined in Plymouth Castle, a brutal fellow named Barret, became his keeper; and this man would, for money, sometimes let the prisoners out for a while, unknown to the committee under whose direction

he acted. Doctor Raleigh gave him no money, may be he had none to give. Yet wanting to see his wife, who he heard lay grievously sick, the Doctor applied to the committee for leave to see her."

"And did they deny him?" said Dame Gee.

"They did," replied the housekeeper, "for they feared he was busied in a plot for the King. The unhappy man was, on this denial, imprudent enough to complain, that it was hard he could not go out who asked permission of the committee to do it, when so many of the other prisoners who did so asked leave of no one but Barret, and paid him for gaining it. That villain, on hearing this, vowed he would be the Doctor's ruin; and too soon did he keep his word."

"It is as I have heard, then," said Dame Gee,—“Barret acted from motives of revenge; because the committee, after this discovery, deprived him of these bribes, and took them themselves."

"It was so," replied the housekeeper; "for one day the wretch entered the Doctor's cham-

ber, as he was writing to his wife, and would see the letter. The Doctor refused, and high words rose between them ; till Barret, drawing suddenly his sword, he passed it through the body of the unfortunate Raleigh. To tell all the sorrow his death occasioned would be vain ; his very enemies looked aghast when they heard of it. But his poor widow, who shall speak her distress ?”

“ I will,” said Dame Gee, “ for I witnessed it, and before she heard the worst, as she stood by the holy well, and, in her agony, for she was half frantic with suspense and fear, enquired of the spirit of the water if her husband might be living or not. I saw her look like yonder corpse, as she cast her eyes upon the deep, still pool, that gave no sign, that showed no change, like the death it thus told.”

“ But her grief after a while gave her a bold spirit to demand justice for the deed,” said the housekeeper. “ She prosecuted Barret for the murder : but the villain’s sister swore that Doctor Raleigh struck his murderer first ; and so the fellow was acquitted, on the ground of

its being an act of self-defence. Yet that false swearer was fearfully punished."

"How punished?" enquired old Nanny.

"Not by the hand of man," said the house-keeper, "for God dealt alone with her. He visited her with a terrible judgment. She was struck in a moment, and became a palsied, miserable creature; and as I have heard from those who saw her, her face was so drawn that it was dreadful to look upon her. She died trembling, railing, and cursing her brother; exclaiming, in her last agony, that Barret had made her damn her own soul, by false swearing before the judges, to save his worthless life. But it's no use being wicked, for bad things will come to light, do what one may to hide them."

"See!" cried Dame Gee rising, "the moon appears unclouded: look how she shines out from amidst her fleecy clouds, like a bride in white and silver. Now is the hour: we must put out the lights, and then you shall be touched," she continued, turning to the house-keeper: "only have faith, and the cure is certain."

“ Must the lights be put out ?” said the housekeeper, in a tremulous voice. “ I had hoped there was no need for that. I am timorous, and have had the headache all the evening.”

“ Fear not,” said Dame Gee, “ no spirit will trouble you whilst I am here ; though by the angry look yonder man’s brow wears even in death, I doubt not he will walk for many a night after he has been laid in the pit.”

“ Good heavens !” exclaimed the housekeeper, “ don’t say such a thing, or I shall never abide coming near him, let alone his touching.”

“ I tell you once again,” said Dame Gee, “ that so long as I hold in my hand this wand of shrew ash there is nothing to fear. You are as safe from the spirit in this chamber as you would be if you were now floating out at sea in one of yonder ships on this fine night.”

“ And if the worst comes of it,” said Nanny Raffles, “ and the dead man should walk, two clergymen, (that is, provided they are real bishop’s clergymen, and not gifted tinkers, and such like godly souls as are preachers, now-a-days, under the parliament,) why two clergymen, I

say, as I have heard tell, can at any time lay a ghost in the Red Sea, by only talking Latin to it; a tongue your ghost cannot abide for the life of him, no more than he can the Red Sea."

"Peace," said Dame Gee; "what we do, we must do before the clouds cross over the moon. Now mark me, mistress," she added, addressing herself to the housekeeper, "you must stand by the side of that bed and wash your hands thrice in the moonlight, whilst I say something; and then strike the dead man's hand three times over your neck, and you are cured. You may then quit the chamber; but after this is done, for your life speak not, till you shall have past the threshold of the door, where I am now going to cast down this sprig of rosemary."

Dame Gee performed this preparatory movement with much solemnity: she returned, like one of the witches in Macbeth, pressing her finger upon her skinny lip in token of silence. The scene was one that would have made no bad subject for the singular and imaginative genius of Egerton, delighting, as it does, in embodying

spirits of a visionary world. The corpse was dressed with a variety of flowers, — those beautiful objects in creation that seem so well adapted for man in all the stages of his being. In his infancy, they become the sweetest toys of his innocence; in youth, they image his beauty and his bloom, and in death they are as emblems of his fragile and quickly fading existence; whilst strewn on his grave, by the hand of affection, they become as fresh tokens that the memory of the just is ever sweet and lovely to the soul: how appropriately, therefore, were sprigs of ivy, laurel, rosemary, and bay, placed about the body of the deceased, as signs and symbols of eternity, lest the careless or the thoughtless should be tempted to confound the decay of the spirit with that of its earthly house.

Thus decorated with flowers and evergreens lay Grace-on-High Gabriel; his ashy countenance still showing by its expression the terrified state in which the soul had quitted the body; though every feature, fixed and rigid, declared the spirit of life was extinct and gone.

As Dame Gee extinguished the candles, the moon, whose beams shone directly on the dead man's face, for the bed stood opposite the window, touched each stern feature with a cold and silvery light, and gave to the head, thus imperfectly seen, a shadowy and terrific character, which curdled the very blood of the old housekeeper, as she stood and looked upon it. Her first sensation was extreme fear, and a strong inclination to cry out ; but Dame Gee, who probably expected such an alarm, again pressed her finger on her lip to betoken silence.

She now extended her left hand to the trembling housekeeper, holding in the right the formidable ashen wand ; and having placed her patient in a proper attitude, as a long stream of moonlight fell upon that part of the bed near which she stood, thrice, by signs, the mistress of spells motioned to her to use the action of washing her hands in the brilliant but impalpable element of light. She obeyed ; when Dame Gee, seizing hold of one of Gabriel's hands, said in a low, hollow tone, as if muttering to herself, " The joints are not stiff :

another — near to him in kindred or in kind — another will go soon ;” and, taking up the dead hand, thrice with its cold and clammy fingers she touched the trembling housekeeper, as the witch repeated these lines : —

Thrice I touch, and thrice I chill,
Thrice to charm away thy ill ;
'T is done — depart hence free from pain,
Ere the moon grows dark again.

The housekeeper, whose terrors had risen to such a height during the operation of touching, assisted as they had been by the effect of the deep, solemn, and measured tone in which Dame Gee uttered her doggerel, required the assistance of that worthy and her sub-priestess to lead her out of the room. No sooner had she crossed the threshold, than the use of her tongue returning, she employed it to declare, “ that not for worlds would she go back again,” and appeared in such a state of nervous excitement and alarm, that old Nanny Raffles was obliged to accompany her to her own room, and to procure help to prevent her fainting, which the housekeeper declared she was about to

do in a tolerably articulate voice, for one in such a predicament.

From this circumstance, Dame Gee became installed as the sole watcher of the dead; and having locked the door inside, so as to prevent old Nanny's sudden return, the next thing the artful woman did was to light one of the tapers by the embers of the mouldering fire; and having placed it on a little, ugly, crooked-legged table, (that an imaginative person might have looked upon it, till it was fancied into the resemblance of some uncouth elfin attendant, now offering his back to hold a light for the convenience of his mistress,) she set about employing herself in the way we shall relate.

She first raised her head, and took one careful survey round the room, not even forgetting the bed, where lay the corpse; and having satisfied her mind that herself and the dead man were the sole occupants of the chamber, whilst the locked door secured her from all intrusion, she snuffed the candle with her fingers; and then, slowly drawing from her pocket a *horn case*, proceeded

to examine its contents, and drew forth several papers. Dame Gee had been in early life a petted attendant of Sir Piers Edgcumbe's mother, who, on account of her quick parts, instructed her favourite in the rare accomplishments among the poor (for such they were in her day) of reading and writing. Whatever might have been the contents of these papers, they completely absorbed her attention, though, now and then, she raised up her head as she was reading, and gave a glance at the dead man, with something like a look of malicious triumph. She read on undisturbed for some time, till fancying she heard a noise, with considerable caution she put the papers once more together, and restored them to her own pocket. She now listened attentively, and thought she heard a door softly moved that opened upon a terrace, situated under the window of the chamber where she was watching.

Curiosity on all occasions, whether they might concern herself or not, was no small stimulus in the active nature of Dame Gee: blowing out

the light, therefore, she stole to the window, opened the casement as gently as possible, and determined to be satisfied.

The night was still and beautiful, whilst every surrounding object slept, as it were, in the silvery silence of the moonlight; not a breath of air stirred the leaves of the old trees, nor rippled the vast deep. The soft illumination showed distinctly every object in the distance, and a long stream of light trembled upon the waters of the bay, where floated many an anchoring bark.

As Dame Gee stood listening at the casement, she saw advance from the shade cast by a clump of thick and tall laurel trees, growing near the house, the figure of a man wrapped in a cloak, who seemed to steal cautiously along, as if to avoid observation. At the same time a female form, clothed in white, advanced from the house, and went to meet him. The hour, the place, the apparent caution, the mystery, were all things calculated to raise to its utmost pitch the curiosity of Dame Gee; and, stretching her head as forward as she dared do (though

from having extinguished the candle there was no danger of her being seen), she scarcely breathed as she listened, so eager was she not to lose the slightest word that might be spoken.

She was, however, doomed to suffer considerable disappointment; for after a few words, probably of greeting, spoken in so low a tone that she heard not one of them, the figures moved slowly off to a part of the terrace far beyond earshot; and where, being within the shadow cast by the spreading branches of the trees that there overhung it, they were less liable to be seen. Some time elapsed ere they again moved; and during this interval Dame Gee maintained her post in patient determination to watch the result. At length they once more approached, and it seemed as if they were about to part, for they paused under the window near a door that led into the house. Only a few words of a broken sentence could be heard, so as to be understood by Dame Gee, yet she was perfectly well convinced that the discourse was one of deep interest to the parties concerned.

The moon shone so bright that though she did not see the face, yet, nevertheless, Dame Gee felt quite certain the *female* she now beheld was no other than Mistress Agnes Piper, whose adventures at the fountain, in the morning, with young Elford, she had not forgotten. At first, therefore, she concluded that the *male* figure who stood talking to her in the moonlight was Elford. But a closer observation of his person, and the tones of his voice, which she now and then caught as they became raised in discourse, soon convinced her it was *not* Elford. He was of unusual height: this young man was not near so tall; and on looking at him again she strongly suspected, from his size and air, that he was no other than Amias Radcliffe, the young gentleman she had seen but that very morning at the bedside of Gabriel before his death.

The circumstance was most extraordinary, and to her mind unaccountable; for whilst she had been gossiping in the kitchen with the house maidens, who talked of nothing but the shipwrecked gentleman and his attendant, Dame Gee had heard them remark, "how very shy

Sir Piers and Sir Hugh seemed to be of the former ; and that Mistress Agnes and Mistress Robina did not appear to like him much better, which they rather wondered at, as he was as likely a young man to look upon as they would wish to see on a summer's day."

Now therefore to find Radcliffe in close conference, by moonlight, and in a stolen interview, for every thing proclaimed it to be such, with Agnes — Agnes, the beloved, the betrothed of Reginald Elford — was a thing so provokingly exciting to curiosity, that Dame Gee would have given the world could she but really have commanded one of those spirits, with whom she bore the character of being so familiar, to discover and unveil to her this mystery. But there was no help for it ; she or any one, as Harry Percy says, might call the devil, but always with a shrewd doubt of his appearing in obedience to such a summons : so, therefore, on the present occasion, she very much preferred the more simple agency of her own sharp ears ; and listened accordingly as attentively as possible to catch the least sound

that might be spoken by either party loud enough to be heard.

She now saw, with astonishment, that Radcliffe had caught the hand of Agnes, who appeared not angrily to resent the freedom, though she motioned to draw it back. Her head was bent; and by his action, the vehement and continued sound of his voice, it seemed as if he was expostulating with her in a manner of considerable energy. There was a moment's pause; and a few low tones, like those of sorrow, came from the lips of Agnes, and Dame Gee saw her put her handkerchief to her eyes. What Radcliffe had said to her, or what the young lady replied, she could not tell; but the listener observed that he left her for a moment, paced up and down the terrace with long and hasty strides, then stopped, and at length returned to Agnes, who drew nearer the house, and made an evident motion as if she were about to enter it.

Again Radcliffe caught her hand, and the following hurried, broken, and almost unintelligible sentences met her ear:—"Good heavens! you will not, then?"

The answer of Agnes was spoken so low it could not be heard, excepting the last words: —“ I tell you once again, my father would never pardon it — I rely wholly upon your honour to ——”

Radcliffe spoke again, and these few sentences were distinctly heard: —“ I have solemnly sworn it, Agnes; and let what will be the event, you shall see I respect truth.” His voice sunk: again it became audible. “ Do not fear: I will act as I have said: can you doubt my sincerity after what I have this night spoken, after what I have promised? Have I not bound my own soul by the awful solemnity of ——” The rest was lost.

Agnes answered in a deep, low tone; and Radcliffe's reply to what she said was made in a gentle, soothing, kind voice, yet too gentle for one word to reach the listener's ear. Dame Gee saw him at length press the hand of Agnes to his lips in a hurried manner; and immediately after she retreated into the house, and closed the door as softly as she had opened it.

Radcliffe for some time paced up and down

with folded arms, airing himself in the moonlight, and now stopping and looking at the door through which Agnes had retreated; then again renewing his pensive walk, till, at last, he turned into a path that led round the house towards the hall entry. Dame Gee quitted the window, her head filled with a fine and busy subject for speculation, curiosity, and, perhaps, mischief.

CHAP. XVI.

Here's a large mouth, indeed,
That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas ;
Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
As maids of thirteen do of puppy dogs.

SHAKSPEARE.

IT now becomes necessary we should revert to the valiant Captain Coleman, who so gallantly offered to squire home Mistress Raleigh. That unfortunate gentlewoman felt herself considerably distressed, that she should be obliged to accept the offer of a person, whose mind, manners, and conversation, were so ill suited to her own. But the remembrance of her poor little girl, a child about eight years old, and who, if any thing happened to herself, would be left friendless in the world, overcame all her scruples, and she resolved to set out with him as soon as possible.

Many vexatious delays, however, arose : — first, the old horse, that loved the freedom of

the field, led the boy an hour's dance in catching him; and, secondly, though there was a saddle, the pillion had been lent, and had to be sent for; and though last, not least, the Captain, on strolling down to the nearest public-house to borrow, if possible, for the nonce, a pair of pistols he had there left in pawn for certain scores of rum and old sack, chanced to meet an acquaintance just arrived from the country, somewhat flush of money, and who was a greenhorn to' boot. The Captain, amongst his many other natural gifts, had one which resembled the instinct of an old cat, namely, to be ever on the watch for prey, and never to let slip a mortal creature, like a poor mouse, if there was a chance of his being caught.

The Captain, following in this respect the strong propensity of his nature, had now a sharp eye upon his friend; and accepting, as he immediately did, an invitation to partake of a cool tankard and a pipe, he drunk only as much as Mistress Foretop used to say was enough to make him pleasant; and then proposed, as an amicable method of whiling away the time, that

he and his friend should just, for some small matter, take a game at shovel-board, or throw a cast with a pair of dice, or cut the cards for knaves and kings ; or, if he preferred it, to try a shut up at fox and geese, or even a round at *shuttlecock*, as it was then both called and spelt ; a pastime so fashionable in the days of James and Charles the First as to be played at court. The Captain having managed, by these social and pleasing arts, to lighten his friend's pockets of as much of his money as he could possibly prevail upon him to lose, began to turn his thoughts on Mistress Raleigh ; so that (notwithstanding the temptation of a fresh black jack standing but half emptied on the table) he soon obliged his steps to take the same direction, and set off, tolerably well armed with a formidable brace of pistols, redeemed by his successful gambling from the thralldom to which they had been consigned ; and by no means deficient in that sort of courage, which is very generally ascribed to the Dutch, and is not unfrequently circulated in this country, in more modern times, under the name of Hollands gin.

In the days of Captain Coleman, however, it was more politely distinguished by the appellation of strong waters.

All these circumstances very much delayed the setting out of Mistress Raleigh; so that it was towards evening when she found herself mounted high on a pillion, behind Captain Coleman, on the back of old Hector, and trotting down a narrow, dark, and muddy lane, fenced on either side by one of those tall and tree-grown hedges so common in the county of Devon. It was exactly that hour when every thing becomes imperfect to the sight, a dark uniformity of tint pervading all around, whilst the general outline of any object might be seen, though its detail is obscured: at such a time the eye may be often deceived, and mistakes inanimate things for those that have life and being; thus giving an alarm to the timid mind when no cause exists for apprehension. Mistress Raleigh now suffered a good deal from these terrors, as she looked about her, and fancied every old stump of a tree, that appeared at a short distance, into a man and a robber. Not

so Captain Coleman, who vaunted his valour and talked big, without showing the least sign of alarm of any kind or description ; and, indeed, if his own account of himself was worthy of credit, he had, on many occasions, proved as valiant as that Hector, after whom the old horse he rode had been so honourably named.

Mistress Raleigh did not, maybe, so entirely rely upon the valour of her escort as to feel perfectly at ease, since he perceived her terrors ; and on her saying something about the men who so beset travellers, &c. the Captain endeavoured to encourage her with such assurances as the following : —

“ Never fear, dame, whilst I am with you ; for if the devil himself should start up in the shape of Roger Rowle, I have a more effectual way of laying him than could ever be found by the best black cassoc of them all. My pistols that hang here ready loaded in the holsters of this saddle—my pistols, I say, discourse an argument that carries with it more weight than one of Latin ; for it is composed of lead and brimstone, something like the sermons of the

chaplain of Grenville's troop. He was turned out of the regiment by Sir Richard because he preached not orthodox on the Scripture use of the vine-press; and kept himself sober whilst the General and captains got drunk. Grenville's chaplain dealt in heavy discourses, two hours long, and would talk to his Majesty's officers of the burning lake; and, therefore, do I compare him to lead and brimstone: the one showing the dulness of his discourse, and the other the Scripture comfort of his doctrine."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mistress Raleigh, not heeding the Captain's commentary on his army chaplain, "what is that lurking yonder under the hedge, as if to surprise us? I am sure it is a man — only look! What can it be?"

"What can it be! A — a — I — I do see something," said the Captain; "but, pshaw, don't be a fool: it's nothing after all but the stump of an old tree; or, maybe, of a milestone. It's nothing; so fear not." And giving a good spur to old Hector's sides, to spirit him

on at a hand gallop, he added, " I fear not, and I say, fear not ; for I would knock down the best man in England with only the butt-end of my riding rod, who should dare start up and say, ' Stand,' to us."

The Captain's challenge was given in a high, bold tone of defiance, that was most unexpectedly answered, as the supposed stump of a tree suddenly started up, and became, to visible perception, a tall, large, and powerful man, wrapped up in a cloak, with a slouched hat on his head, and a piece of crape over his face : he started forward, seized the horse by the rein, crying STAND to Captain Coleman.

Mrs. Raleigh screamed aloud : the Captain uttered an exclamation of terror and surprise, his hands trembled, his teeth chattered, and he fumbled at the holster, and drew out a pistol. But ere he could do any execution with it, if any he meditated, his sudden assailant wrenched the pistol out of his hand ; and using it as the young warrior, David, did the sword of the giant he had overcome in battle, turned it against its master. He presented it to Cole-

man's head, and threatened to blow out his brains, unless he instantly gave up his money.

“There is no fighting without arms,” said the Captain, as he drew forth an old leathern purse, and yielded it to the highwayman. The robber took it with much deliberation ; gave it a toss in his hand, ere he passed it into his own pocket, and swore it was very light. Light certainly it was, for the Captain was too cautious a man to carry about with him the whole of his morning's winnings. During this time, so completely was the man of war overcome by surprise, or some other feeling, that he actually remained as quiet as old Hector, who stood stock still, like a well-disciplined trooper, waiting further orders. His rider never once attempted to spur him on, or to make any resistance ; and Mistress Raleigh afterwards was heard to declare, that he trembled more than herself, though he contradicted this, and said it was the horse that shook under the weight of his double riders.

The robber now advanced to the widow, and demanded her money also : she prepared

to yield it, but not quite so readily as the Captain had done; for though she offered no resistance, she nevertheless ventured on a mild and gentle expostulation. “ Sir,” said Mistress Raleigh, “ I am ready to obey your demands, since life is a thing more precious than silver, or even than gold, though gold I have none to give you. Yet I must tell you — and you shall hear me, for if you insist I yield — that if you take this purse, you do in some sort take my life. Maybe you are not entirely hard of heart; I will hope you are not. Distress may have driven you to desperate courses, for many, alas ! in these days, have fallen from sorrow into sin. I am a widow, sir, the widow of Doctor Raleigh, who, as all the country knows, was so cruelly murdered in his prison. I have a child, a poor orphan child : God knows we live hard enough, and I toil like the meanest to get us bread. This purse contains the payment of a small sum of money that was lent by my poor husband, just before his misfortunes, to assist an honest tradesman who wanted help ; for never was the hand, the heart, or the

door of my unhappy husband closed on the unfortunate. If you take this small store, you take our all, and reduce the widow and the fatherless to the lowest state of misery."

"If that purse," said the robber, with energy, for he had paid the utmost attention to all she said,—"if that purse contained a thousand crowns I would not touch one of them without you gave it me freely. The widow of Doctor Raleigh is safe from all danger from me or mine. What I am, or who I am, it boots not to say, except it be to tell you thus much. In the troublesome year before the last, during the siege of a certain town, your husband was the means of saving my life. I was a prisoner, and should have been most unjustly hanged as a spy, but for his pleading for me."

"You are like, friend, to hang for a thing of no less moment," said Coleman, whose courage somewhat returned on finding the highwayman so sensible to generous feelings towards Mistress Raleigh. "I am guarding this good gentlewoman home, and so as you will not touch her purse,

I will thank you to give me mine back again ; for I am not the richest man in the world any more than yourself."

"Peace, fellow," said the robber, "and rest satisfied whilst you have whole bones in your skin, for they are not so easily mended when once broken as a gambler's purse may be. You rob the simple and the ignorant at no risk at all ; and I do but rob a stabcast, a pick-thank, and a loaded-dice-man by the wayside, at the risk of my own neck. I will give thee nothing but a broken head, if thou darest to swagger here with me. So silence, and let me speak a word to this worthy gentlewoman ; and then you may pass on your way, for I have done with you."

Mistress Raleigh would have spoken, but the robber would not suffer her : he thus continued : — "I am not so bad, though, perhaps, bad enough, as you may think me. But that is not to the purpose ; for what I would say concerns not myself alone, but you and your poor child. These are evil times ; and I can tell you, Mistress Raleigh, that harmless as you are, yet you

are not without enemies. Barret will never forgive you for having prosecuted him for your husband's death; though he was, to the shame of justice be it spoken, acquitted. Now mark my counsel, and it shall not fail you, and maybe the hour may arrive, sooner than you think for, when you may be driven to follow it. Should you need shelter from danger, or should you be driven by any distress from your own home, *fly to the glen of Lydford*; fear not, for there shall you meet a friend. Bring with you no one but your poor child; for if a third person is seen, your friend will not appear to receive you. Remember this, and come alone. Give me no answer, but recollect that the man who was rendered desperate by all that can goad on a man to madness or to crime, who dared rob a villain worse than himself, yet, nevertheless, would not wrong the widow and her child — such a man, I say, may be trusted, may be relied on. Farewell; beware of the fellow who is with you; I know him, and that he is a trap by trade."

So saying, this extraordinary highwayman

wrapped his cloak close round him, made for a part of the hedge, where by an aperture he had so suddenly passed into the road on hearing the approach of travellers, and carrying off the noble captain's pistol and purse, as trophies of victory, disappeared as speedily as he came. The Captain growing valiant so soon as danger was removed from his path, struck his spurs into old Hector's sides, and muttering a few oaths, threats, (and also declaring what great things he would have done, had not the management of his horse, and his embarrassment about Mistress Raleigh, deprived him, for the moment, of all power, so that he lost his pistol, and could do nothing,) he set off at a round trot, and soon cleared the narrow and dark lane where he had sustained so notable a defeat. Nothing else worthy record occurred during the journey, and it finally ended in a safe arrival at the widow's door.

Mistress Raleigh's cottage stood not far distant from the church of Tamerton Foliot; we do not here say more about it, because we shall have occasion to revert to it hereafter in a more

important part of our narrative. It was now dark, and on entering the house Mistress Raleigh found her little girl sitting alone, over a small fire, anxiously waiting the return of her mother, whose delay had cost her many tears. The widow procured a light; and though the cowardly conduct of her guide, and the warning given respecting him by the robber, had made an impression on her mind by no means favourable to the Captain, yet, nevertheless, she considered herself bound to show him such civilities as she could, in return for his having escorted her home.

She produced, therefore, such scanty refreshments as her house contained. These were poor and homely enough, but the Captain did not refuse them; and having satisfied his appetite, the widow, who had been engaged with her dear little girl whilst he supped, now looked anxiously for his departure. He declared his intentions to be those of returning immediately to Plymouth, where he talked of knocking up constables and magistrates that very night, in order that he might lay an information, and

cause to be apprehended the rascal who had so violently disarmed and robbed him. Mistress Raleigh, though she feared to offend him, nevertheless could not help venturing an observation that she thought if he had acted with more spirit, when he was first stopped, no harm would have ensued to himself or his property, for the robber had seemed to her to be unarmed altogether.

“Or, most probably, bearing about him some concealed arms,” said Captain Coleman; “but in regard to my conduct, widow, whatever there was in it that might seem not so daring as my usual practice on such occasions would have warranted you to expect, I can truly say you were the cause of it. I have great tenderness, great consideration for your sex; it is the fault of my character. Why, hang me, if I could ever sack a town with any heart, when the women came squalling about me. I saw your terror before the robber came up; and if I saw that when there was no danger, what might I not expect when a fellow, that looked as strong as Hercules, seized my horse by the

bridle? and though you say he was unarmed till he forcibly possessed himself of my pistol, yet I think differently, and that he was very strongly armed under his cloak. Besides which, how knew I that old Hector would stand fire? There's no saying what might have been the consequence if he had started, or reared, or kicked at the report of my pistol, if I had been so rash as to fire. You behind me on the pillion, you must have been thrown, you might have been killed, there's no saying what might have been the consequence; so I acted for the best solely on your account; for if I had been alone, I would have brought off the fellow at my horse's tail. As it is, I gave in to your weakness, and by my means you see all went well, for you saved your money."

"I thank Heaven I did," said Mistress Raleigh; "but the robber's refusing to take it was not only extraordinary, but, for one in his way of life, truly generous: I shall never forget it."

"Nor I neither," said the Captain; "for, confound the rogue, he left me most cause to remember him. He stole a purse containing

fifteen gold pieces, and ten silver crowns, and a pistol that has been as dangerous, in its day, as the plague; for it was never seen, when in my hand, but death was sure to follow on mankind; and as to his generosity to you, I do not believe it, no, not for a moment. It was fear, pure fear; for the rascal saw well enough, that though I had magnanimity of spirit sufficient, out of tenderness to you, to pass over my own wrongs, rather than terrify you by making war about myself, yet had he attacked you, or laid but a little finger upon your purse, he saw I should have felled him to the earth; therefore he made a show of generosity, and let you go scot free. Now, good widow, I am a plain man, and I honestly tell you a poor gentleman, owing to the times, and I do think, that as my loss was sustained solely in your service, that the value of my pistol and of my purse ought to be considered. Wherefore I must beg, as some small compensation, that you hand over to me the half of those same forty shillings which I enabled you to save from the robber."

Mistress Raleigh looked exceedingly dis-

tressed ; her own poverty was extreme ; she had a child to maintain, and an immediate cause of necessity for money, that she kept a secret fast locked in her own bosom ; in every way, therefore, this sum was of consequence to her. To deprive her of half her little store would be a cruel act ; the value of the pistol she did not know, but she was quite certain that the purse, of whose lightness the robber had complained, did *not* contain what the Captain averred. She offered him a quarter of the sum of what she had about her, as some reimbursement for his loss ; but this he refused, and insisted on his first demand, raised his voice, and on her again making a strong remonstrance, and begging him to consider the distresses of herself and her child, he grew so violent and so rude as to offer to help himself to the purse from her pocket.

Mistress Raleigh screamed with affright, the child cried out at seeing the struggle between her mother and this new robber, when suddenly the latch of the cottage door was raised, and a young man, tall, well looking, and dressed in a large horseman's cloak, stepped in (most pro-

bably he had heard the cries for help before he did so), and going up to Captain Coleman grasped him by the collar, freed the widow, and shook him off ere the astonished rogue well knew by whom he was so suddenly assaulted. An order, that he should instantly leave the house was pronounced by the young gentleman in a tone of high command, whilst he drew a short sword, that he wore by his side to enforce it in a more determined and peremptory manner.

The Captain had no inclination to dispute an order thus strongly enforced ; for he grumbled, muttered, yet took up his hat and walked towards the door, as if with the intention to make his exit. When, however, he stood near it, he placed his hand upon the latch, and ere he raised it turned round his head, fixed a look expressive of ferocity and malice on the young man, who had so delivered Mistress Raleigh, as he said, "I go at your bidding now ; but the next time we meet you shall go at mine, and possibly where you will not so well like it : I shall remember you." So saying, he paused not

another moment, but quitted the cottage, mounted the back of old Hector, and set off as fast as he could on his way to Plymouth. He did not steal the horse, possibly because he could not have remained in the town with safety had he done so : old Hector, therefore, was returned safe to his right owner that night. Our business, however, still lies at the cottage of Mistress Raleigh.

No sooner was Captain Coleman gone, than, without saying a word, the widow gave such security to her door as it would admit of receiving from a single wooden bolt. This done, she turned round to the young man, took him by the hand, spoke a few confused words of welcome, sunk into a chair, and burst into tears, as he alternately attempted to soothe her agitation, and to bestow some kind notice on the little cherub who stood at her mother's knees, now calling on her not to cry, and now looking with wonder and pleasure in the stranger's face.

The stranger was young ; and though dressed in clothes very much inferior to the garments

usually worn by the gallants of the period, yet was he one of those striking figures that would no where pass unnoticed, and carry with them an air of authority and natural ease which shows superiority of mind and manners, as well as of station, at the first glance. His face was eminently handsome: its expression sincere, noble, and full of kindness; it was such an expression as wins the heart through the eye, and never deceives the favourable opinion it was so well calculated to raise at first sight. Yet in the lofty carriage, in the expanded forehead, the bright and flashing eye, the brows flexible and easily knit, or even frowning on the slightest cause of emotion, there was something that spoke irritable and impetuous feelings, which, though we do not defend them as virtues, are, nevertheless, often found united with what is great in heart, tender in disposition, and generous in action.

Such, in appearance, was the young man who had so suddenly rescued Mistress Raleigh. As soon as she could sufficiently recover herself, to enable her to speak, she welcomed him most

kindly by the name of Reginald Elford ; at the same time asking him, why he came at such an hour ? feared his being in her neighbourhood would be dangerous to him, and hoped that Captain Coleman had not recognised him. Finally, she asked where he was now staying, and if he were in safe hands ?

“ I have no time, dear Mistress Raleigh,” replied the young gentleman, “ to answer half the questions you propose to me, since my business is most pressing ; and though my sense of your worth is, and ever must be, the same, and I would freely trust my life in your power, yet for your *own* sake I feel it but right not to trust you with a knowledge of those anxious circumstances which, at present, it can do you no good to learn, and if they fail, you might be involved in their consequences. Rest satisfied ; for the time being, I hope I am in safety. My greatest care is to seek my father, who has fled from his old concealment, and in a state of mind the most alarming. Yet have I this day seen one, faithful to our affairs, who assured me that you knew where he might be found.”

“ I do, indeed,” said Mistress Raleigh: “ your father was in the utmost danger ; he was pursued by his enemies, watched, beset in his last lurking place, and escaped once more to trust his life to my care. For some time I managed to conceal him in an upper chamber even in this cottage : within these two days, however, in consequence of some persons, who are on the look out for him, being stationed in the village, we have been compelled to have recourse again to the old tree and the hut — a miserable shelter ; but there has he passed two nights, and there will he pass this night. The child has carried him food ; for did I go to him so regularly as I could wish, something might have been suspected ; whilst little Mary’s running out is thought nothing of, and scarcely noticed.”

“ Dear Mistress Raleigh,” said Elford, “ how shall I ever thank you as I ought to do, for your generous care of my poor father ; and this child, too ? so young, yet so early faithful. How do I trace in this the kindness of a merciful Providence, who has on so many occasions made the helpless widow and a poor fatherless

girl the means to save the life of my most afflicted and persecuted parent! How shall I thank you? May God requite you, for I have not the means."

"Do not talk of requiting me," said Mistress Raleigh: "of whatever assistance I may be to your father, I do but my duty to the generous friend of my deceased husband,—that friend who saved my child and myself from perishing on the moors; who softened the horrors of my husband's imprisonment, and watched over the wretched widow and her hapless infant, when he was so fearfully torn for ever from her hopes. Could I cease to remember these things—could I cease to be faithful—what were I better than one devoid of all true charity, of every grateful feeling of the soul?"

Mistress Raleigh spoke with warmth; and after receiving the kindest assurances of the gratitude and respect in which she was held by Reginald, she gave him all necessary instructions, and directed him to the spot where he was to seek his father; and as he knew perfectly well the most intricate parts of the surrounding

country, no danger was to be apprehended of his losing his way. Mistress Raleigh saw him depart, with many anxious feelings for his safety, but did not venture to bear him company at that hour of the night. She retired, worn with the events of the day, to rest with her beloved and only comfort, praying God to bless and protect the fatherless and the widow committed to his care.

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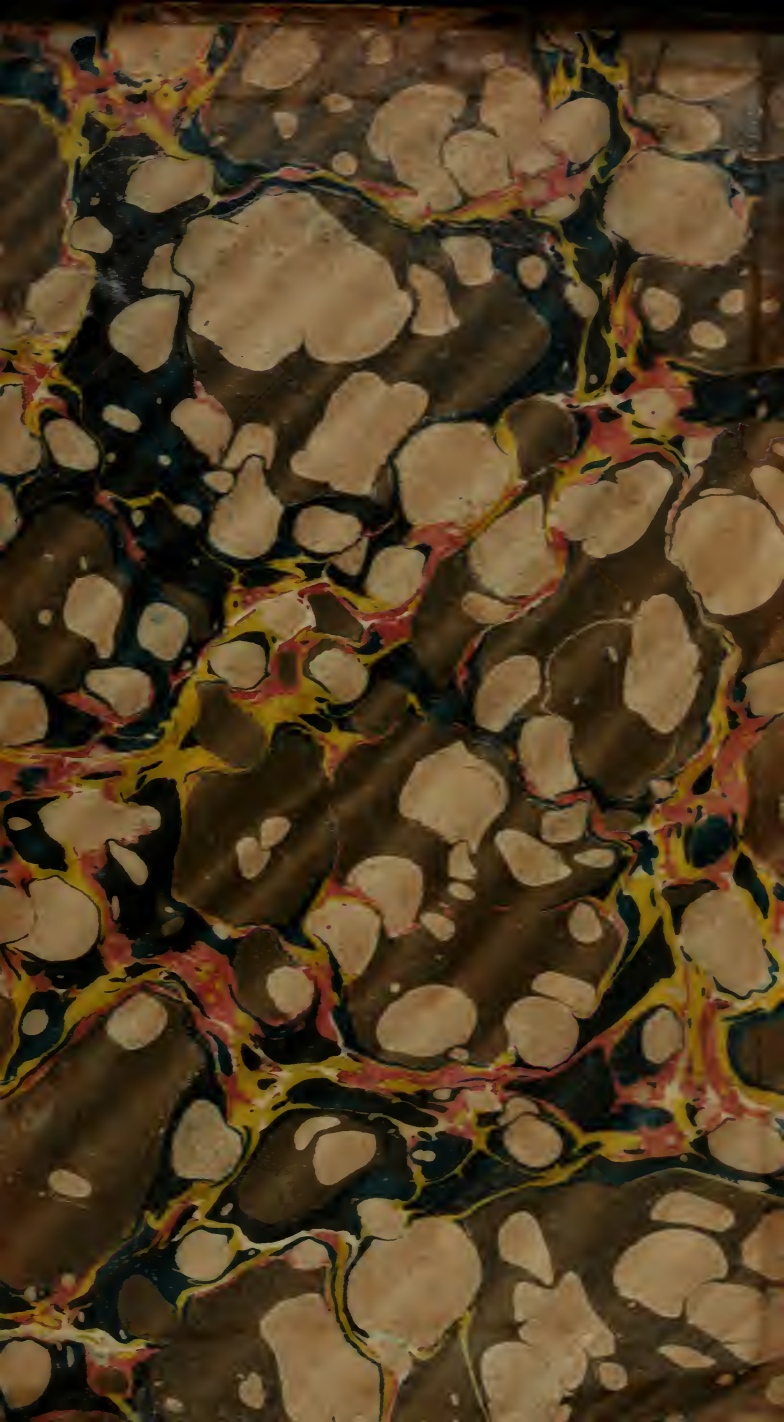
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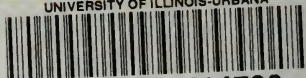
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